Nexus of Patriotism and Militarism in Russia

A Quest for Internal Cohesion

Edited by Katri Pynnöniemi

HUP HELSINKI UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Preface

The edited volume will explore the nexus between patriotism and militarism in today's Russia. During the last 20-year period, there has been a consistent effort to consolidate Russian society and foster a sense of unity and common purpose. To this end, Russian authorities have activated various channels, from educational programmes and youth organizations to media and popular culture. With the conflict in Ukraine, the manipulation of public sentiments – feeling of pride and perception of threat – has become more systemic. The traditional view of Russia being Other for Europe has been replaced with a story about enmity. The West is portrayed as a threat to Russia's historical-cultural originality and Russia as a country encircled by enemies. However, Russian society remains sceptical towards state-led projects that mix patriotism and militarism.

This book will provide new insights into the evolution of enemy images, the ways in which societal actors perceive official projections of patriotism and the growing role of militarism in Russian society. It is argued that these are key variables when analysing

the trajectory of Russia's foreign policy and the transformation of society in general. Thus, we may provide a nuanced understanding of the nexus of patriotism and militarism in Russia and its implications for the country's domestic developments and for Europe in general.

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Keywords: patriotism, militarism, Russia, enemy images, sacrifice, youth, threat perceptions

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

In this volume, the ISO 9 standard has been used to transliterate Cyrillic characters into Latin characters. Direct quotations from Russian have been translated by the authors unless stated otherwise.

Contributors

Alava, Jonna, Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki and researcher, the National Defence University, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0793-8256

Kahla, Elina, Principal Investigator at the Aleksanteri Institute, and Docent in Cultural History of Russia at the University of Helsinki, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9473-8158

Laine, Veera, Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3990-1714

Lassila, Jussi, Senior Research Fellow, the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5966-2947

Mitikka, Eemil, Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0784-261X

Nazarenko, Salla, Doctoral Researcher, University of Tampere

Parppei, Kati, Academy Research Fellow, Adjunct Professor (Russian History), Department of Geographical and Historical Studies, University of Eastern Finland, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4322-9046

Pynnöniemi, Katri, Assistant Professor, Mannerheim Chair of Russian Security Studies, University of Helsinki and the National Defence University, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6123-1206

Svynarenko, Arseniy, Research Fellow, Faculty of Social Sciences, Tampere University, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5602-7240

Zavadskaya, Margarita, Researcher, Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3728-4073

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Katri Pynnöniemi

Formulation of the Research Problem

The nexus between patriotism and militarism is multidimensional, even contradictory. As the subsequent chapters in this volume vividly demonstrate, there is not one but many interpretations of what patriotism is in contemporary Russia, ranging from military patriotism (Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume) to intimate patriotism (Nazarenko, Chapter 7, this volume) and 'patriotism of despair' (Oushakine, 2009). Where the concept of patriotism carries with it a positive connotation, militarism or militarization is usually judged negatively. The latter two concepts are often used in a normative sense, to criticize excessive military spending (Naidu, 1985; Wolpin, 1983) and disproportionate coercive power in the domestic sphere (Hall and Coyne, 2013). More recently, James Eastwood (2018, p. 97) has conceptualized militarism as ideology, and Bryan Mabee and Srdjan Vucetic (2018) have suggested a typology that distinguishes between nation state

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militarism, civil society militarism and neo-liberal militarism. In the Russian context, the concept of militarization has been used with reference to the increased role of military considerations in both the domestic and foreign spheres (Golts, 2018; Sherr, 2017).

In this edited volume, we will investigate the consolidation of the nexus between patriotism and militarism in Russia, but also factors and processes that open up space for alternative framings of patriotism and militarism. The conflict in Ukraine has an important role in the formation of this nexus. First, it has provided a context for the elaboration of the 'war myth': a public perception according to which 'Moscow's wars are just, defensive, triumphant, and preventive' (Kolesnikov, 2016, p. 2). Second, it is against this context that Russia's main security strategies have been reviewed. Accordingly, the National Security Strategy (Rossijskaâ gazeta, 2015) frames patriotism as a strategic resource, whereas the Military Doctrine (Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossijskoj Federacii, 2014) identifies the low level of patriotism among the youth as a 'danger to military security'. To prevent this situation, the Russian state has sought to enhance the military-patriotic education of the youth.

The key question is whether the maintenance of the war myth and the consolidation of patriotic narratives and social practices translate into people's 'will to fight'. To put it more bluntly, does the current discourse on Russian exceptionalism, historical traditions and patriotism include elements that facilitate the militarization of society in a way that legitimates the preparation for war and the use of force against Russia's enemies (external or internal)? Or is it rather the case that patriotic sentiments among the Russian population are developing in directions that may undermine authorities' attempts to enhance internal cohesion?

This volume seeks to answer these questions by exploring the formation of enemy images, perceptions of patriotism and elements of militarization that together form the nexus of patriotism and militarism in contemporary Russia. It is suggested that, while certain processes (e.g. the manipulation of enemy images) seem to strengthen this nexus, there is also evidence of the opposite phenomenon (e.g. a strong sense of 'individual patriotism' shared

by the population). The title of this volume, *Nexus of Patriotism and Militarism in Russia: A Quest for Internal Cohesion*, captures the dilemma.

This volume is divided into three parts, which each present original research contributions to the evolution of national narrative, perceptions of patriotism and elements of militarism in contemporary Russian policy and society. Each part begins with a brief introduction of the core concepts used in the analysis. In the following I will elaborate on the ontological security concept, which provides a loose framework for interpretation.

Ontological Security as a Framework of Interpretation

The ontological security concept was coined by psychologist R.D. Laing to describe a difference between persons suffering from pathological anxiety (ontological insecurity) and those individuals who are able to experience themselves as 'real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person' (cited in Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi, 2020, p. 881). The concept refers to a 'feeling of being secure oneself' that 'enables one to feel like a separate and autonomous being' and from this position interact genuinely with others. In the context of international relations (IR), ontological security is welcomed as an alternative to the traditional view of security as physical survival (Steele, 2008). However, the concept was adapted to IR via Giddens (1991), who downplayed (or rather ignored) a distinction between normal and pathological anxiety. As argued by Gustaffsson and Krickel-Choi (2020, p. 877), the importance of this distinction has been lost in the IR literature, and with that, the idea that anxiety is a normal part of life. The stronger the feeling of ontological security, the better abilities (resilience) an individual (or state) has in coping with recurring instances of anxiety. Whereas those with a weaker sense of self-identity (state identity) may feel insecure when 'a value central to a particular subject's sense of self is somehow at risk' (Gustaffsson and Krickel-Choi, 2020, p. 885).

An application of the ontological security concept in the analysis does not exclude change a priori as something potentially harmful. The interpretation of this concept in favour of identity related stability emerged later, when the concept was adapted to the IR disciplinary framework (Browning and Joenniemi, 2017; Croft and Vaughan-Williams, 2017). A key insight inherent to the above discussion is an understanding of ontological security as a fundamentally relational (intersubjective) and fragile construction – my reading of the story can be contested by others and it may not even correspond with the real events. However, my incomplete version of reality may become a constitutive element of my 'narrative of the self' (Giddens, 1991, p. 243). With the emphasis on these two features – intersubjectivity and fragility – the ontological security framework can be used in analysis of both self-identity formation and the formation of collective (state, region, group) identities.

In the case of states, the biographical narrative ties together critical situations and other events into a coherent story of the state (Steele, 2008, pp. 10–11). For example, as suggested by Kazharski (2020, pp. 24–25), discourses on 'Russian civilization' and the 'Russian world' rest on an interpretation of the Soviet Union's dissolution as a trauma, against which Russian 'civilizational identity' is construed. Framed in terms of ontological security, the trauma of territorial loss is a source of perpetual anxiety that generates ontological security-seeking (Kazharski, 2020, p. 25; Torbakov, 2018, p. 186). It is in this context that the West is represented as a near-existential threat to Russia's self-identity. Since the early 1990s, the Russian public has been persuaded to believe that 'real causes of Russia's many problems had to be found outside the country' (Hansen, 2016, p. 369). The conspiracy theories about the Western interference into Russian affairs are used both in the sphere of popular culture (Yablokov, 2018) and in the pseudo-academic literature on hybrid war and information warfare (see Pynnöniemi and Jokela, 2020). As argued by Hansen (2016, p. 370), the fostering of enmity towards the West has damaged relations but, paradoxically, has also brought with it 'greater ontological security', that is, 'a stronger sense of being'.

Both Kazharski (2020) and, earlier, Torbakov (2018) emphasize that the anchoring of state identity to the trauma of disintegration and the loss of superpower status has been deliberate. Putin's 'famous cliché about the USSR's collapse as the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century"' (Kazharski, 2020, p. 25) articulates a sentiment that Russia's political borders do not 'fit' with its current state borders. Later, this sense of incompleteness has become an integral part of Russia's story of itself. Against this background, the emergence and consolidation of conservatism in Russian politics seems logical. The conservative ideal entails 'faithfulness to oneself, to one's historical and spiritual path, and the ability not to submit to alien influences' (Laruelle, 2020, p. 119). The historically formed spiritual and moral values are seen as a shield that protects the state and national identity from harmful (Western) influences. In other words, conservatism offers a formula whereby historical myths, critical situations and subsequent traumas, as well as visions of the future, are tied into a consistent national narrative.

The hypothesis put forward in this volume is that Russia's quest for ontological security translates into a set of national narratives and policies (e.g. military-patriotic education) that are used as a resource to strengthen internal cohesion (understood in the sense of ontological security) and the people's will to defend the country against external and internal enemies (security as survival). Here trauma is used as a 'resource' (Steele, 2008, p. 57) to synthesize Russia's national narrative as a perpetual search for 'historical Russia' in opposition to the current 'incomplete Russia'. This choice brings the country into conflict with its neighbours. Each of these conflicts creates a new trauma that, in turn, produces the feeling of anxiety in society. The military patriotism offers a channel to manage ontological insecurity (security as being) and, at the same time, strengthen narratives that prepare the society for war (security as survival). However, as shown in this volume, alternative interpretations of patriotism exist that tell the story of Russia anew.

The ontological security concept provides a loose framework for the research analysis, although each individual chapter will apply

this framework on the basis of different disciplinary traditions (political history, sociology, political science). Before I introduce individual chapters in more detail, I will briefly discuss the results of recent public opinion surveys and research literature on public perceptions of external and internal threats towards Russia.

When Everything Was Made for War, Until It Was No More

The above title paraphrases a famous book written by Alexei Yurchak (2005) that summarized the Soviet collapse in one sentence: everything was forever, until it was no more. The Nobel laureate in literature Svetlana Alexievich contemplates the Soviet past in her work and argues that everything in the Soviet Union was built for war:

> We were always either fighting or preparing to fight. We've never known anything else – hence our wartime psychology. Even in civilian life everything was militarized. (Alexievich, 2017 [2013], p. 4)

Indeed, 'war', as Gregory Carleton (2017, p. 2) has argued, 'saturates Russian culture', and it 'serves as a foundation for a Russian myth of exceptionalism' (see also Kolesnikov, 2016). In the post-Soviet Russian context, memory of the Great Patriotic War has 'proved to be the most "politically usable" element of Russia's past', notes Russian scholar Olga Malinova (2017, p. 45) Consequently, the Soviet myth of the Great Patriotic War has been integrated into a new narrative of Russian history and 'largely retains its status as sacred and untouchable' (Fedor, Lewis and Zhurzhenko, 2017, p. 14). However, while the victory myth has become an important part of the Kremlin's domestic political agenda, official security strategies downplay a possibility of major war against Russia.

As suggested in the military doctrine (2014), the possibility of a major war that would endanger the physical survival of the Russian state is declining, while attempts to undermine Russia's internal political composition and the original sense of

belonging to the world, that is, the country's ontological security, are increasing. There is, however, an important distinction to be made between these two types of threats. The traditional military threats, as they are defined in the Russian strategic documents, are linked to definite action (the use of military force, the targeting of critical infrastructure) that is performed by an external force, whereas colour revolutions, or changes in social-political preferences, are examples of 'critical situations', defined by Steele (2008, p. 51) as 'circumstances of a radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalized routines'. With this strategic-level formulation, a public space has been opened for discourse whereby Russia is viewed as a target of foreign influence operations (Patrushev, 2020), a 'besieged fortress' (Yablokov, 2018) and a victim of a Western-conducted hybrid war (Pynnöniemi and Jokela, 2020).

The saturation of war discourse as part of current Russian strategic communication is in contradiction with the observation made by Alexievich in her book. Indeed, she argued in 2013 that the war had ceased to be a constitutive element of people's self-identification. On the contrary, 'nowadays everything is different. People just want to live in peace without a great idea' (Alexievich, 2013, p. 4). Public opinion polls conducted in Russia partially support Alexievich's observation. The Levada-Center research agency has regularly asked respondents what in their opinion best characterizes the idea of a great power. The two features that respondents have regularly valued most are high well-being of citizens and economic and industrial potential of the country. For example, in 2018, 69% of respondents ranked well-being as the most important feature of a great power (Levada-Center, 2019, p. 33). Among the other features indicated in the survey are the following: military power; great culture, science and art; freedom and citizens' rights; rich natural resources; a heroic past; and respect from other countries.

However, this survey identifies a change in the way in which military power features in people's understanding of the great power idea and Russia's place in the world. In a survey conducted

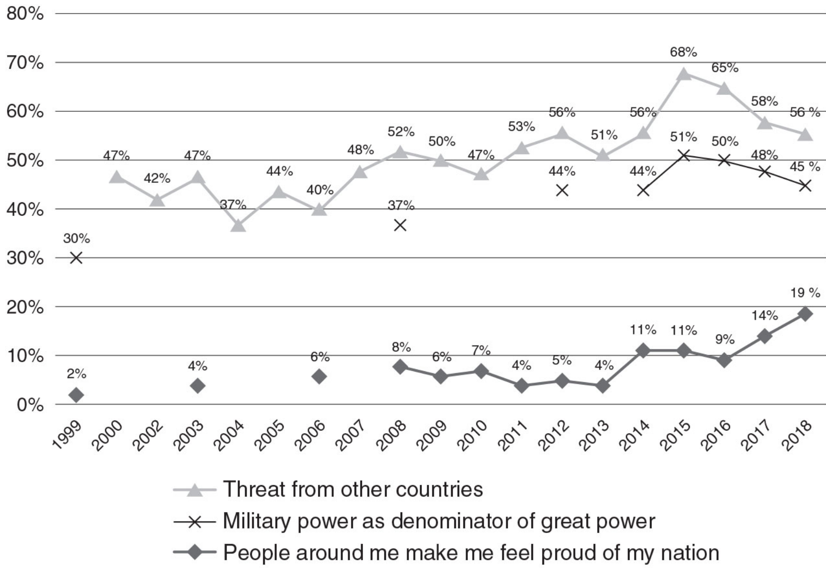

Figure 1: Trajectories of patriotic and militaristic sentiments in Russia between 2000 and 2018.

Source: Levada-Center (2019). Figure by the author.

in 1999, 30% of respondents identified military power and nuclear weapons as the key features of a great power. In a 2016 survey, this figure had risen to 51% of respondents, and it has not decreased significantly since then (see Figure 1 above). At the same time, Russians have become prouder of their homeland. As Figure 1 illustrates, in 1999 only 2% of Russians thought that the people around them made them feel proud of their nation, but by 2018 this figure was already 19%. Although the overall percentage might seem low, the 17% rise between 1999 and 2018 is significant. One possible explanation for this change is a surge of pro-Kremlin and nationalistic sentiments after Russia's successful military operation in Crimea in February–March 2014.

Interestingly, the share of respondents who ranked the 'respect of other countries and authority in the world' as a significant feature of the great powers has steadily declined. In 1999, 35% of respondents saw this as an important feature, above military power (30%), while in 2018 only 13% of respondents listed it as a significant feature of great powers (Levada-Center, 2019, p. 33). Another survey may provide at least partial explanation for this trend. According

to this, the self-image of Russia among respondents has undergone a significant change. In 2007 only 7% of respondents thought that others (meaning a majority of developed nations) saw Russia as an enemy. Ten years later, in 2017, 30% of respondents thought others considered Russia their enemy. Only a minority (from 3 to 7%) expected others to identify Russia as a friend (Levada-Center, 2018, p. 197). Perhaps not surprisingly, an image of Russia encircled by enemies has grown in significance (in 1994, 7% of respondents agreed with this statement; in 2017 this figure was 23% (ibid., p. 193)). These results also correspond with a survey conducted in 2016, in which 25% of respondents thought that Others definitely posed a threat to Russia. Only a tiny minority (8% in 2000, and 5% in 2016) of respondents did not see other countries as posing a threat to Russia (Levada-Center, 2017, p. 222).

The set of opinion polls cited above obviously do not provide a comprehensive picture of the public mood in Russia. Although the Kremlin has a monopoly when it comes to traditional media space (especially TV), fragmentation of society and the existence of alternative sources of information (e.g. social media) provides a growing hindrance for the mass manipulation of public perceptions. In fact, several studies have shown that, although the 'artificially induced patriotic surge' (Gudkov, 2015, p. 88) gave rise to conservative reconsolidation around the regime at a critical moment, this type of mobilization has been short-lived (Volkov, 2019). Thus, even if we can locate a set of discourses and practices that seek to interpret patriotism as an element of militarization (in a sense of the legitimation of the use of force), alternative interpretations of events exist, and thus alternative (re)sources for Russia's ontological security. The aim of this book is to explore both of these directions of enquiry and thereby contribute to the contemporary research on Russian domestic and foreign affairs.

Organization of the Book

This volume is divided into three parts, which each deal with one aspect of the nexus: the role of enemies and others in the

formation of the Russian national narrative, the existence of several, competing perceptions of patriotism in Russia and the elements of militarization in three distinctive spheres: practices of military conscription, organization of military activities for the youth, and popular literature.

The first part includes three chapters that each explore the role of enemies and Others in the Russian national narrative. Soviet and later Russian patriotism activated the tendency to a dualistic categorization in Russian culture that dates back to the medieval worldview and is preserved in text and concrete representation of Russia's others and enemies (see Parppei, Chapter 2, and Laine, Chapter 3, in this volume). In the Russian national narrative, Europe has been Russia's most significant Other, against which Russia's exceptionalism is reflected. Historical experience but also religion has shaped Russian perception of threats. The juxtaposition of Orthodox Christian Russians against infidel enemies carries traces of the medieval dualistic thinking to this day. The analysis of contemporary Russian strategic communication (see Laine, Chapter 3, and Pynnöniemi, Chapter 4, this volume) allows us to pinpoint historical continuity in the representation of Others and enemies, but also significant changes in the threat perception. The underlying assumption in the Kremlin's discourse is constant competition between the countries and nations. Success in this competition is an attribute of a country's independence from others – a strong nation is united and sovereign, whereas a weak state is in danger of falling behind. The image of a 'worthy enemy' captures an expectation of permanent conflict and struggle for power and resources. In the crisis situations, competitors become enemies that contain Russia and prevent it from achieving the position it deserves (by token of historical destiny).

Although not a novel phenomenon, the intensity with which such argumentation appeared in the Kremlin's strategic communication in the mid-2000s and again in the context of conflict in Ukraine marked a change. The historical patterns of enmity and misunderstanding were reinterpreted as questions of system

survival, in the sense of both cultural identity and military security. As shown by Veera Laine in Chapter 3 of this volume, distance to Europe is not just about Russia's economic and technological backwardness – an issue that could be fixed with Russia's technological modernization – but it is attributed to difference in values. The ideas borrowed from Russian conservative thinkers helped to make sense of this change in priorities. A notion of a common European home with shared values and norms is replaced with an idea of Russia as a true Europe.

The Russian religious thinker and philosopher Ivan Il′in's texts may have played a role in shaping Russia's strategic thinking at a time when an opportunity to consolidate Russia's great power status emerged again. The analysis of Il′in's enemy images and their juxtaposition with the Kremlin's strategic communication of threats provides a new opening that deepens our understanding of the link between this conservative philosopher and the conservative turn in present-day Russia.

The second part of this volume takes up the issue of multiple interpretations of patriotism and what it entails in the Russian political context. The analysis of the enemy images in Russia's national narrative points towards strong historical continuity in the representation of others. The inherent dualism of Russian political discourse provides a resource that can be activated in the creation and consolidation of enemy images. However, public opinion surveys and previous research show that mass mobilization during the conflict in Ukraine has remained 'artificial' (Gudkov, 2015, p. 88) As Eemil Mitikka and Margarita Zavadskaya show in Chapter 6 in this volume, although the connection between public preferences for authoritarian rule and stronger patriotic attitudes has slightly strengthened since 'the rally around the flag' in 2014, it remains very ephemeral. Second, Russian patriotism compared to state propaganda mostly relates to notions of pride, dignity and self-esteem, rather than willingness to fight. Lastly, perceived threats and fear reinforce the exclusive form of today's patriotism in Russia, and strengthen the link with preference for authoritarian rule.

The exclusive, top-down assigned understanding of patriotism as loyalty to the state and the 'stability' of the regime is, however, being questioned. In Chapter 5 in this volume, Jussi Lassila argues that the greatest challenge of patriotic politics and its implementation is the expectations of the youth. Owing to the lack of reciprocity and feedback from youth, of genuine commitment and determined implementation of projects, as well as the inability to include youth, these educational goals are inadequate and, in many respects, unrealistic. It is telling that even Russian journalists, as shown by Salla Nazarenko in Chapter 7, assign different meanings to patriotism, from 'intimate patriotism' to 'military' and 'infowar' patriotism. Although state-centred military patriotism does have its ramifications in the minds and activities of Russian TV journalists, the official discourse is not accepted without criticism, Nazarenko concludes.

The third part of the volume explores practices of militarism and/or militarization in contemporary Russia. Chapter 8 by Arseniy Svynarenko will analyse the recent survey results that show growing trust in Russian armed forces. This chapter will discuss the meaning of these results and provide an overview of the newly organized military-political training among conscripts and military personnel. It is argued that, with the reorganization of military-political training, the authorities aim to further enhance a positive image of the armed forces, and – what seems most important – to consolidate the troops' moral and political views as well as willingness to fight. Given the rather bleak demographic outlook, it is quite logical that the Russian state authorities have invested in the military-patriotic education of young people. In fact, as pointed out by Jonna Alava in Chapter 9, the Russian Young Army, Ûnarmiâ, has become an important tool for the authorities in activating young people. The increasing role of the Russian armed forces in this field should be noted as well, in particular because the military-patriotic education is framed as a response to external threats: Western influence aka globalization, democratization and the prospect of major military conflict. In this sense, the Ûnarmiâ concept is geared towards the military mobilization of the Russian youth.

With the restoration of the military-political directorate in the Russian armed forces, political leadership in Russia has sought to strengthen the loyalty of military personnel towards the political leadership and increase control among the ranks. The emphasis on political loyalty towards the regime leaves open a question, discussed in Elina Kahla's Chapter 10, on the sacrifice of dying on duty. As the *Kursk* submarine tragedy of the year 2000 brought to the fore, the prioritization of relations between the Russian state and the Orthodox Church is problematic in a multi-confessional and multi-ethnic state. With the narrowing public space to express criticism towards the political leadership, powerful artistic contributions provide a way to deal with the trauma and sacrifice.

In conclusion (Chapter 11), the editor of the volume summarizes the main findings and suggests new directions for research on the basis of the present analysis.

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PART I

The Russian National Narrative

Introduction to Part I

The first part of this volume explores how enemy images and narratives of Russia's historical-cultural originality are recycled and renewed in the official discourse on Russia's place in the world. It is argued that enemy images play an increasing role in Russian domestic and foreign policy. The representation of others as enemies is a way of dealing with anxiety, fear and insecurity. As noted by David Campbell (1992, p. 2), the 'ability to represent things as alien, subversive, dirty or sick, has been pivotal to the articulation of danger'. The research on nationalism has explained the process whereby difference between in-group (us) and out-group (Others) has been made on the basis of race, skin colour, or dialectic. These markers have been used to legitimate hierarchical power relations but also to foster hostility between the groups. In this way, the identification of significant Others is a part of the identity-building process, telling who 'we' really are (Harle, 2000, pp. 11–12). The portrayal of the other as an enemy does more than that, however. As put by Harle (2000, p. 12),

> While the Other simply defines our identity by excluding the Other, the Enemy tells what the conflict between the Enemy and the Friend is all about. It tells what the Enemy is and what its basic nature is; furthermore it explains why this is so.

This is a key insight, as the recognition of the other as an enemy shapes the interaction with the external world. Although human

collectives have through centuries projected fear, hate and danger on others, these are nevertheless learned categories of thinking and as such fragile (Gross Stein, 2013; Harle, 2000; Zur, 1991). A threat to (national) security is a political, psychological and intersubjective construction that may acquire a specific form but, at the same time, cannot be captured in simple, unambiguous definitions, and, what is more, its perception depends on idiosyncratic reading of the situation and the perception of the target (Gross Stein, 2013, p. 2; also Jervis, 2017, p. xviii).

National styles and strategic culture provide specific ways of looking at the world that are 'maintained over time through institutionalization, socialization and common historical memories' and, in turn, shape perception of threats and interests (Jervis, 2017, p. xx). It is also conceivable that states may interact closely on a daily basis and 'still live in their own perceptual and conceptual worlds', Jervis explains (Schouten, 2008, p. 6). This idea became a matter of European security when the German chancellor Angela Merkel infamously observed in March 2014 that Putin 'is living in another world' (The Week, 2014). Indeed, the first part of this book explores how enemy images and narratives of Russia's historical-cultural originality are recycled and renewed in the official discourse on Russia's place in the world. With this focus on narratives of enmity, the book contributes to the previous literature on threat perceptions and their role in Russian domestic and foreign policy. The main emphasis will be on the historical and situational factors (narratives, metaphors and symbols) that influence the formation of the threat perceptions.

In Chapter 2, Kati Parppei examines development of enemy images in the context of the Russian national narrative. In Chapter 3, Veera Laine shows how the understanding of Russia's Others has evolved during the Putin era. This is followed by Katri Pynnöniemi's analysis of enemy images in Russian émigré philosopher Ivan Il′in's essays and their influence in contemporary Russian security discourse (Chapter 4). Thus, these three chapters explore the ways in which historical enemy images and threat perceptions are entangled with Russia's relations with Others and visions of the country's future.

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CHAPTER 2

Enemy Images in the Russian National Narrative

Kati Parppei

Abstract

Historical contextualizing is essential to examining and understanding the forms of patriotism and applications of national narrative in contemporary Russia. An important aspect in the formation of collective identities are the perceptions of outer threat at any given time. In this chapter, certain aspects of the development of enemy images in Russia are briefly studied and contextualized, followed by an examination of their manifestations in the contemporary Russian politicization of history.

Keywords: Enemy images, nationalism, narrative, history politics

Introduction

In his book *Russia – the Story of War*, Gregory Carleton (2017, p. 219) points out the enthusiasm of contemporary Russian politicians for reminiscing over the nation's military history:

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> National identity so defined assumes that history, at least for Russians, repeats itself, extending back for centuries through a pattern of confrontation in which the actors' names may change but not the primary action. It flattens differences, turning sui generis conflicts into a single, paradigmatic one that pits Russians against an implacable foe, where they are always the victims but never the vanquished. Victory always obtains, Russia always comes back. (ibid., p. 219)

Understanding contemporary concepts, ideas and images of outer threat in Russia indeed calls for historical contextualizing. In this chapter, some basic premises, turning points and cases concerning the development of enemy images are examined in the context of the Russian national narrative and national (popular) historiography. The emphasis is on, on the one hand, continuums and, on the other, transitions; that is, it will be examined how certain imagery has been applied to depict new situations of a similar nature, and how it has been adjusted to give a context to new kinds of enmities at any given time, including the present.

The focus is on the time before the revolution of 1917. First, we will take a look at the medieval ideas about enemies, and then focus on the usage of historical enemy images in the 19th century, when nationalistic ideas were developed in earnest. Certain points concerning the images and uses of history in the 20th century and post-Soviet time are shortly examined in the final section of the chapter.

By no means does this overview aim to be a comprehensive representation of the very complicated and multifaceted matter of extensive time span, or to cover all the relevant aspects. For instance, the focus in this chapter is in 'outer' enemies, not in the 'inner' ones – although, as we shall see, these categories have tended to shift and fluctuate according to the circumstances at each given time, adding to the complexity of the issue.

For anyone acquainted with complicated and multifaceted questions, such as shared or collective identities, the conception of Us versus Other – insiders and outsiders – is a familiar one, as well as the formation processes of the two categories (or sometimes

more than two, as we shall see). It is precisely through contacts with other groups that the self-image of a group begins to take shape; the features typical to one's own reference group form not by themselves but in relation to and reflecting the others. Further, the features connected to Us tend to be antonyms of those describing the Other: negative attributes projected to form the image of the Other implicitly or explicitly allow us to embrace the opposite ones (see e.g. Feres, 2006; Löytty, 2005, pp. 7–15). To put it simply, for every hero there has to be a villain.

Image, in this context, refers to mental schemas formed of certain issues – practically any issues – in a human mind when information of the issue is received and processed in relation to previous information and conceptions, the individual's personal history, learned values, emotions and so on. Once formed, images tend to be persistent and hard to change. It is also typical for images that those formed of distant objects, such as a faraway ethnic group, tend to be sketchy and coarse owing to a lack of information and personal experiences (Boulding, 1956, pp. 56, 68; Fält, 2002, p. 10; Ratz, 2007, p. 201). Further, the enemy is basically the Other that threatens the security, well-being or whole existence of Us; the image of an enemy is thus an image of threat. As Marja Vuorinen (2012, pp. 1–4) puts it, an established enemy image can gradually turn into an archenemy, an ever-present threat (see also Rieber and Kelly, 1991).

Institutions, such as the education system and media, are important producers and distributors of so-called shared or collective images (indeed, when examining an image we always examine its *producer* rather than its *object*) (see e.g. Boulding, 1956; Fält, 2002; Ratz, 2007). More often than not, those institutions, most often connected to contemporary power structures, have political and/or ideological motives in choosing what sorts of information is distributed in order to influence the image formation. Obviously, until the 19th century and the emergence of mass media it is hardly possible to talk about truly shared images; instead, we should talk about images produced by the elite and also assumed by them. But, along with the rise of literacy and the production

of printed material aimed at common readers, the formation and distribution of collective images of Others, including hostile ones, became a significant development.

Impressive images of the collective past with its heroes and villains were a significant tool of nationalistic indoctrination, especially from the 19th century onwards, in Russia as well as in other countries. A crucial and conspicuous category of that historical imagery was the representations of historical conflicts and hostile encounters; defining mental (Us versus Others) as well as concrete borders has been – and most definitely still is – an essential factor of nation building.

Dualism: Christianity Sets the Tone

In order to understand the present perceptions of Russia's geopolitics, its national narrative and relation to its Others, we have to take a look all the way back to medieval text production. The medieval worldview produced some of the basic premises for categorizing otherness in Russia, echoes of which can be heard in contemporary discourse. It can be said that the ideas presented in chronicle texts formed a kernel of some sort, on which layers of changing meanings were added later on over the centuries. For instance, as we shall see, a certain tendency towards a dualistic categorization in Russian culture – central for enemy image formation – can be traced to the medieval worldview as presented in the preserved texts and concrete images (see e.g. Lotman and Uspenskij, 1984).

One of the earliest sources preserved for examining medieval Rus' is the so-called *Primary Chronicle*, which depicts events related to Kievan Rus' from the 9th to the 11th century. It has been preserved as two manuscripts, dated to the 14th and 15th centuries. One has to bear in mind that, owing to the temporal distance between the presumed original production date and the date of preserved copies, the information may have been remarkably altered when the text was copied. Editing texts according to the contemporary political situation was a normal procedure in medieval text production; parts were added or removed, or details

changed, according to the political situation and interests of any given time. Therefore, the *Primary Chronicle* may reflect the 14th- and 15th-century understanding of certain issues rather than that of the original production date (Korpela, 2009, p. 342).

The depictions of 'otherness' in the *Primary Chronicle* consists of interaction with a wide array of peoples from the steppe. Pechenegs, Hagarians, Khazars, Bolgars, Cumans and many others are mainly represented in the context of shifting alliances and hostile encounters with the people of Rus'. Nevertheless, the enemies are depicted relatively neutrally; practically no negative or pejorative attributes are connected to them by the author(s). Greeks are also represented as constantly waging war with Kievan Rus', but even they are depicted in quite a docile way, despite certain fleeting comments such as: 'and so the Greeks talked, treacherously, for they have always been cunning and are to this day' (Povest' vremennikh let, 1926, p. 50).

As the narrative proceeds, the *Primary Chronicle* depicts the arrival of Christianity to Kievan Rus'. The impressive and often quoted story of Prince Vladimir I choosing the religion, and the collective baptisms arranged by him, are most probably a hagiographic-historical legend. Nevertheless, the gradual turning of Rus' into a Christian realm was a central development for our topic, though far less rapid and drastic than it is often presented. After the descriptions of the Christianization of Rus', chronicle passages concerning hostile encounters have a deeply dualistic tone: we are Christians, while Others are pagans – or those of Latin faith, which was deemed equally negative. In medieval Russian[1] chronicles, the Orthodox Christian sphere was the uncompromised foundation and context in relation to which all the other confessions and their supporters were interpreted and weighed – invariably for the benefit of Orthodox Christianity.

Slavic *pogan* derives from the Latin word *paganus* – in Greek παγανιστής – and originally it meant a villager, a dweller of the countryside. In Russian chronicle writing, it refers to mostly non-Christians, who were represented as a threat and a constant nuisance. However, conflicts with non-Christian peoples were still depicted as God's punishment, with no pejorative descriptions

of the opponents in the *Primary Chronicle*. For instance, it is described how 'pagan Cumans' invaded Rus' in 1068 because of the principality's internal quarrels (Povest' vremennikh let, 1926, pp. 118–120).

Early chronicles produced in Novgorod offer quite a similar imagery about certain encounters. The earliest copy of the *First Chronicle of Novgorod* is dated to the 13th century, and the *Fourth Chronicle* to the 15th century. Their depictions of Novgorodians' campaigns and battles against peoples named variably as Nemtsy, Chuds and Iems (some of the names have often been interpreted to refer to Finno-Ugric tribes), as well as against Lithuanians, are not especially explicit in their descriptions of the enemy; rather, they are neutral and somewhat pragmatic, concentrating on the outcome of the each event rather than the opponents' qualities (see Novgorodskaâ četvertaâ letopis', 1848, pp. 11, 15, 17; Novgorodskaâ pervaâ letopis', 1841, pp. 4–6, 9–10).

A crucial turning point in the chroniclers' attitude to Otherness in relation to the Orthodox Christian realm is reflected in the descriptions of the Tatar invasions, beginning with the depictions of the first assault in 1223. The *Novgorod First Chronicle* describes the confusion concerning the identity of the invaders in its depiction of the Battle of Kalka:

> The same year, for our sins, unknown tribes came, of whom no one exactly knows, who they are, nor whence they came from, nor what their language is, nor of what race they are, nor what their faith is; but they call them Tatars. (Novgorodskaâ pervaâ letopis', 1841, p. 39)

The Tatar dominance over Russian principalities lasted for about 240 years, and, not surprisingly, in 15th- and 16th-century texts Tatars are presented as the main protagonists of Russians, who 'take' and 'plunder' cities. The alleged division is of a deeply religious nature, and depictions of Tatars brought on a colourful usage of diverse concepts underlining the wild otherness of the invaders. They are called not just pagans but 'those of other faith', 'faithless', 'godless', 'Hagarenes', 'Ishmaelites' and so forth.

As the Muscovite power was consolidated at the expense of the other principalities of Rus', the idea of Moscow fighting the infidel enemy in cooperation with the Orthodox Church gave chronicle texts that were describing conflicts an increasingly dualistic tone. For instance, the descriptions of the Battle of Kulikovo (1380), fought between a Tatar usurper, Mamai, and Muscovite Grand Prince Dmitrij Ivanovič and their allies, were remarkably 'fattened' during the 15th and especially 16th centuries. The first, laconic, chronicle passages are preserved from the 1440s, and they depict quite a typical medieval skirmish. Gradually, however, the battle narratives were interpolated into long, colourful, detailed and dramatic descriptions of an apocalyptic encounter between good and evil forces, Moscow gaining the glorious victory with the support of the Church (Parppei, 2017).

It can be said that, together with the representations of the siege of Kazan (1552) the 'Kulikovo cycle', as the texts concerning the battle are collectively called, set the tone for representations of – especially Islamic – enemies of Russia for centuries to come. From the 1550s onwards, images of Otherness in relation to Us were sketched in earnest in Muscovite text production, based firmly on religion.[2]

During the 16th century, the attempts to represent the history of Muscovite power as a kind of a holy continuum found a form in two great compilations produced during the latter half of the century, *The Book of Degrees* and the *Nikon Chronicle*. For the first time, chronicle entries and stories were turned into whole narratives with both a context and purpose, and the already-established imagery concerning Russia's relation to its Others was further consolidated. For instance, Grand Prince Aleksandr Nevskii's alleged victories against the Swedes and Livonians in 1240 and 1242 were turned into significant reference points for military encounters with the Western enemies. The hero of the Battle of Kulikovo, Dmitrij Ivanovič – called 'Donskoi' from the 16th century onwards – and Aleksandr were symbolically paired to represent the defenders of the Fatherland from the Eastern and Western threats, respectively (Isoaho, 2006, p. 371).

The practices of printing arrived in Russia relatively late, and chronicle writing and copying persisted for quite a long time as a primary form of history writing. A certain watershed in distributing images of the collective past is the 1680s, when a publication called the *Kievan Synopsis* was produced, printed and distributed. Hailed as the first textbook of Russian history and utilized for that purpose up until the 19th century, the book was compiled by the monks of Kievan Cave monastery. The monks wanted to emphasize the importance of Muscovite central power for warding off the political and military threat represented by Muslims and Catholics, and they used a concept of 'Slavo-Rossian' nation to refer to this idea (however, when it came to ecclesiastic power, they wanted to keep it firmly in Kiev) (Plokhy, 2010, pp. 258–266). This setting – the first part of which was understandably favoured by Russian power circles – set the tone for the whole publication, emphasizing the external threat. For instance, a long and detailed version of the narrative of the Battle of Kulikovo was included in the second edition of the *Synopsis* in 1681, obviously inspired by the Russo-Turkish War (1676–1681) (Parppei, 2017, pp. 102–107).

Owing to the relatively wide distribution and long 'life span' of the *Synopsis*, as well as its role as a source for later historians, it can be said that the medieval ideas and images of Rus(sia)'s external enemies were smoothly transferred to the age of print along with this book compiled by Kievan monks.

Russia Against the 'West'

National history writing began to take shape along with the rise of nationalistic and national-romanticist ideas from the 18th century onwards. In Russia, the first scholarly historians were imported from Western Europe; higher schooling was still only budding during the first half of the century. But soon the collective past became of interest to Russians, too, scholars and amateurs alike. Medieval texts were used as source material, and the representations of history were quite laconic catalogues of events and turns following the style of chronicle entries (Thaden, 1999, pp. 15–78).

In general, the post-Petrine Russian elite was very much oriented to the West, especially France, and the national past, or the geopolitical position of the empire, was not seen as an acute question to discuss or write about. From the 17th to the 19th century, however, the empire had expanded remarkably, which had brought along new issues and questions in defining Us and Others. From the 17th century onwards, religion gradually lost its primary role as the dividing line. As the Russian empire came to embrace a growing variety of peoples and cultures, some of which had previously been fought off as enemies, the diverse customs and habits of the new 'Russians' puzzled the early scholars and also mixed with the budding field of history and the questions of the origins of Russians and the Russian state (Shields Kollmann, 2017, pp. 55–83; Slezkine, 2001, pp. 33–50).

In 1812, during the Napoleonic Wars, a series of events took place that can be said to have remarkably steered the direction of Russian nationalistic thinking – already in formation – and accelerated the attempts to define the empire's geopolitical status, especially in relation to Western Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte managed to move his troops all the way to Moscow; nevertheless, his campaign ended in retreat and severe problems caused by the harsh Russian winter. Despite the victory, the invasion by the French emperor caused a deep collective trauma in Russia. In the texts produced after the events, Napoleon was emphatically compared to historical evildoers, such as Attila and Xerxes – universal history was more familiar to the early 19th-century elite, who produced the texts, than Russian history – but also to Batu, Mamai and Tokhtamysh, the infamous Tatar invaders (Napoleon i francuzy v Moskve, 1813, p. 104; Pis'mennoe nastavlenie Napoleona svoemu istoriografu, 1814, p. 37; Pis'mo iz Vitebska, 1813, pp. 6–7; Uvarov, 1814, p. 24; Parppei, 2019, pp. 140–166).

Thus, an already-established image of certain kinds of archenemies was applied to refer another sort of invader – while Tatars, the 'original' enemy, had been gradually assimilated into the Russian empire. The Battle of Moscow in 1612 was often used as a reference point, too, probably because the Polish-Lithuanian troops had, like Napoleon's, arrived from the west. Also, a statue

celebrating the victory of the Russians two centuries earlier had been planned in Moscow (Ašurkov, 1980, p. 69).

The Napoleonic Wars produced not just a collective trauma but also a collective pride of having been the nation that 'saved the whole of Europe', despite the fact that the said Europe had, in fact, turned against it in the form of Napoleon and his multinational troops (see e.g. Carleton, 2017, pp. 42–43). Further, medieval dualistic thinking resurfaced in the ideas of pious and God-loving Russian people alone defending their fatherland against an evil invader – in the texts published during and right after the campaign, French people were described as having given up God and the proper world order in the revolution, and sometimes Napoleon was compared to the Antichrist himself (Pesenson, 2006). It can be said that the Napoleonic Wars and their ideological aftermath notably accelerated the discourse of the geopolitical position of Russia between 'Europe' and 'Asia', and the events form a certain kind of foundation in Russia's further ponderings of its role in relation to other nations.

During the 19th century, some crucial developments took place in relation to the distribution and consolidation of enemy images, together with the indoctrination of patriotic ideas of Russia. First, national historians, Nikolai Karamzin (1766–1826) at the fore, with his massive *History of the Russian State*, formulated the national narrative of Russia's past in an eloquent and fascinating way, completely different from the style of the 18th-century historians. Colourful and dramatic turns of the history of the Fatherland – and his anachronistic applications of contemporary ideas, such as 'national pride', to medieval societies – marked out the way for the future popular representations of Russian history, including its military gains and losses (Thaden, 1999, pp. 47–78).

Second, the schooling system was developed, contributing to the growing literacy rate and enabling the gradual distribution of the imagery of the national past. School textbooks were an effective tool for establishing shared images of collective history, including ideas and conceptions of historical enemies of Russia. Even though schooling was arranged by numerous distributions,

there were certain attempts by state officials and churchmen to unify curricula (see Brooks, 2003, pp. 35–58).

Third, the amount of popular printed images and literature rose remarkably during the 19th century, together with the development of the schooling system. So-called *lubok* illustrations were colourful prints, sold on the streets and bought by people to decorate the walls in their houses. The topics included military ones – and images of enemies. By the time of Napoleon's invasion, some two hundred *lubok* prints were already being produced and distributed about the event. Quite often these images were satirical in nature, depicting Napoleon and the French troops in trouble, while some of them celebrated 'Russian spirit' as a counterforce to the enemy (a prime example of the formation of collective identities by using the Other as a parallel) (Norris, 2006, pp. 13–35).

Further, the production and coverage of not just prints but whole popular booklets grew rapidly, especially during the second half of the 19th century. Most of the topics were aimed to entertain – for instance, folk tales were a popular theme – but historical and military issues found their textual form as well (Brooks, 2003, pp. 59–62, 67–80). While a printed image opened possibilities for distributing, for instance, powerful caricatures of an enemy, or military gains of the Russians, popular textual material gave a possibility to contextualize events and produce powerful propaganda about enemies.

For instance, in 1877–1878 during the Russo-Turkish War a wide array of popular booklets was published depicting the military events in the Balkans and their background. The mostly anonymous authors tended to leave aside recent historical events – such as the Crimean War of 1853–1856 – and concentrated on contextualizing the Balkan campaign in Russian national history and Russians' historical battle with Muslims, beginning with the Tatar invasions (Berens, 1877, pp. 6–8; Russko-tureckaâ vojna i mir Rossii s Turciej v 1878 godu, 1878, pp. 3–4, 31–35; Suvorov, 1877, pp. 5–6, 20, 37). They also enthusiastically emphasized – in the spirit of pan-Slavism – the Russians' duty to help their brothers in tribe and faith to fight against Turkish tyranny. The booklets

presented the reader with colourful and graphic depictions of the horrors performed by the Turks in Slavic villages, as well as representations of Turks as wild, unorganized, lazy and immoral (as opposed to hard-working and pious Slavs) (Malyhin, 1878, pp. 1–12; Spasenie russkimi hristianki ili Vostočnaâ vojna, 1877, p. 26; Suvorov, 1877, pp. 13–14, 24; Vojna serbov i černogorcev (slavân) s Turciej za nezavisimost', 1877, pp. 13–14, 40–54; Vojna s turkami. Sovremenno-istoričeskij očerk, 1877, pp. 7–13). Typical conceptions of the enemy in propagandistic representations as such, these depictions once again leaned on the already-established imagery of Muslims as an archenemy of Orthodox Russians (and Slavs in general) (Vuorinen, 2012, pp. 2–4). They also reflected the contemporary ethnic-religious tensions within the empire. The expansion into the Caucasus and Central Asia brought a challenge to assimilate new Muslim minorities, and the already-assimilated ones, such as the Tatars of Crimea and Kazan, were considered a potential risk, especially during times of war (Brower, 2001, pp. 115–135; Campbell, 2015; Jersild, 2001, pp. 101–114).

As was the case in the Napoleonic Wars, Russia was once again presented as a lonely defender of Christian faith; the 'West' – referring to Western European countries – is depicted as an ally of Turkey, more interested in its own profit than the distress of fellow Christians at the Balkans (Russko-turetskaâ vojna i mir Rossii s Turciej v 1878 godu, 1878, p. 46; Vojna s turkami. Sovremenno-istoričeskij očerk, 1877, pp. 20, 27). Around the same time, N.A. Danilevskij (1822–1885) published his writings on Russia and Europe, asserting that Russia had never been an aggressor in its dealings with its neighbours; rather, the peoples integrated into the empire had greatly benefited from the providence of Russia (Danilevskij 1995, pp. 18–44).

Further, according to Danilevskij, the peaceful state had been repeatedly hounded into such positions that defence was the only option:

> And so, the composition of the Russian state, the wars it waged, the goals it pursued, and even more, the recurrent favorable circumstances it never utilized: all show that Russia is not an

> ambitious, aggressive power, and that in the modern period of its history it most often sacrificed its own evident gains, which were legal and just, to European interests, often even considering that its responsibility was to act not as an independent entity (with its own significance and its own justification for all its actions and aspirations) but as a secondary power. So why, I ask, should there be such distrust, injustice, and hatred toward Russia from the governments and public opinion of Europe? (ibid., pp. 35–36).

As we shall see, this conception, formulated during the 19th century and based on Slavophilic doctrines, was to become a central one for Russia's national 'self-image'.

During the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905), the production and distribution of enemy images was taken to a new level: for instance, in *lubok* images racial differences were brought out, exaggerated and ridiculed – Japanese soldiers were compared to, for instance, monkeys and dogs (Norris, 2006, pp. 109–115). Notably, this war was – like the preceding ones – represented in the context of a dualistic juxtaposition between Orthodox Russia and the savage enemy (even though the nature of this conflict was not depicted religious as such). It is also interesting how medieval imagery was used in the pictures: a Russian medieval knight was depicted fighting 'yellow dwarves'; also, Japanese were referred to as Mongols, thus creating links to the established conceptions of archenemies of Rus(sia) (ibid., pp. 120–121).

During the first decades of the Soviet system, national history with its images of (arch)enemies was paid generally less attention than had been during the 19th century. Nevertheless, the massive ordeals of the century – the Second World War being the most influential one for Russia's narrative – called for reference points from the national past to encourage and raise the morals of the troops. For instance, the bravery of Aleksandr Nevskii and Dmitrii Donskoi was pinpointed by Josif Stalin as an example for Soviet soldiers; the latter was also a topic of a propaganda poster, reminding that death was better than honourless life (a quote regularly used in connection with Dmitrii Donskoi and the Battle of Kulikovo). Also, in a booklet about the Battle

of Kulikovo, published for the usage of the Red Army in 1945, the challenges faced by Soviet soldiers were called 'contemporary Kulikovo fields' (Dunlop, 1983, pp. 218–219; Parppei, 2017, pp. 216–220).

Also, it can be said that the dualistic pattern – previously applied to religion as the dividing line – once again resurfaced in the form of politics. At the level of images, fascism was the main enemy, against which the Soviet ideology fought with the same devotion as previously the defenders of the Fatherland supported by the Orthodox Church. Later on, the 'capitalist West', the United States at the fore, formed the most significant ideological opponent of the Soviet system.

National Narrative and Contemporary Enemies

In many cases, the dividing lines between Us and the Others in contemporary Russia are nothing but clear; instead, they are fuzzy and fluctuating and prone to criticism and re-evaluation. For instance, when the date of the Battle of Kulikovo was announced a national holiday in 2001, Tatars criticized the decision (Sperling, 2009, pp. 244–245). In 2011, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin (2011) announced that the battle should not be seen to have been an ideological one, and that Russians and Tatars had been fighting on both sides. The value of the multi-ethnicity of Russia is also constantly emphasized in the presidential statements. For instance, in the speech delivered on the Day of National Unity in 2017, President Putin noted that:

> Every nation brings to the world its own lesson, its unique heritage. Russia has such an invaluable legacy in the centuries-old experience of the peaceful living of people of different nationalities. Another large, multi-ethnic country like ours just does not exist. And the preservation of the diversity of the peoples of Russia, their ethnic and cultural identity, is of key importance to us, as well as traditions of mutual trust, consent and kinship. These foundations fill the unity of the Russian nation by a special, internal force. (President of Russia, 2017)

Nevertheless, the dualistic imagery regarding, for instance, the Battle of Kulikovo has not been compromised in school textbooks and other popular representations of the issue. It can be said that finding the balance between the usage of dualistic imagery to consolidate the national narrative and inner cohesion, on the one hand, and cherishing the idea of multi-ethnic realm, on the other, is difficult and calls for constant negotiation. Moreover, while contemporary Tatars and other relevant ethnic minorities have been distanced from the ideas of ancient archenemies, the state aims to keep them in control by, for instance, language policy, as has been the case for centuries. Also, Jews are constantly brought out in the context of conspiracy theories by nationalist historians (King, 2014, pp. 215–219).

Another example of the ambiguous definition of contemporary enemies is the question of Ukraine. According to a questionnaire by the Levada-Center (2017), in 2017 Ukraine was considered the second in the list of Russia's enemies, right after the United States. However, it is precisely the idea of East Slavic unity that is used to justify Russia's demands and expectations concerning Ukraine. As Serhii Plokhy (2017, p. 349) has put it,

> Post-Soviet Russian identity is probably best imagined as a set of concentric circles. At the center of them is the core of Russian ethnic identity. The first concentric circle surrounding this core deals with Russian political identity based on Russian citizenship. There follows a circle concerning East Slavic identity. The final and outer layer consists of all other participants in Russian culture – the Russian-speakers of the world. (ibid.)

Plokhy's formulation reminds of Thomas Hylland Eriksen's suggestion concerning anthropological categorization: instead of clear-cut boundaries defining 'us' from 'them', some groups can be considered closer to us than the others, 'almost like ourselves'. Eriksen (2010, p. 79) calls this approach *analogue*, as opposed to *digital*, in which categories of otherness are unambiguous and fixed. Questions concerning categories of belonging have recently also turned acute in the context of the Orthodox Church and

the issue concerning the potential autocephaly of the Ukrainian church, which the Russian Orthodox Church considers intervention and a threat to its historical unity by the Patriarchate of Constantinople (OrthoChristian.com, 2018).

Partly relying on the idea of profound East Slavic unity, the imagery of the past has been used as a tug-of-war for the right of possession for Crimea. One argument for the peninsula belonging to Russia is that it is the place where Vladimir I performed the baptism of Rus(s)ians. Vladimir Putin called it a 'sacred land' and compared it to Jerusalem (President of Russia, 2014). Ukraine has used the same argument to defend its point – Vladimir was, the Ukrainians have pointed out, a ruler of Kyiv (RadioFreeEurope, 2014). Unveiling a massive statue of Vladimir in Moscow in 2016 was a part of this competition for the symbolic control of the ideas of the past. When it comes to Crimea, the layers of military meanings also include the Second World War, during which it was occupied by Axis troops and served as a stage for some of the bloodiest battles at the Eastern Front.

In general, the 'West' is a general concept that can refer to everything that threatens traditional Russian values, questions – implicitly or explicitly – Russia's position as a modern superpower, and intentionally destabilizes established relations between Russia and former Soviet republics, as in the case of Ukraine. It can be said, in the light of the previous examples, that one set of enemies also consists of those – also largely 'Western' actors, or domestic ones controlled by the 'West' – who, according to Russia, attempt to 'falsify history' to belittle the military heroism of Soviet and Russian troops, or present Russia as an initiator in military conflicts (contemporary or historical).

The importance of the ideal of national collective understanding of history – the great national narrative – for the contemporary power circles in Russia can be seen in the presidential speeches to the Federal Assembly, in which the national past and its heroes are constantly referred to. For instance, on 12 December 2012, President Vladimir Putin announced:

> In order to revive national consciousness, we need to link historical eras and get back to understanding the simple truth that

> Russia did not begin in 1917, or even in 1991, but rather, that we have common, continuous history spanning over one thousand years, and we must rely on it to find inner strength and purpose in our national development. (President of Russia, 2012)[3]

Also, Eastern European attempts to re-evaluate the Soviet-induced history writing of the Second World War, which in Russia is depicted (once again) as a scene of undisputed Soviet/Russian heroism and sacrifice, called for reactions, such as the 'Presidential Commission of the Russian Federation to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests', founded in 2009. The foundation of the commission, as well as the project of producing 'unified school history textbooks' (see e.g. Rossijskaâ gazeta, 2013; Znak.com, 2016), are prime examples of attempts to control the ideas of the past.

Those attempts, however, have been explicitly represented as reactions to others' attempts to contort the past. In 2017, President Vladimir Putin warned against 'falsifying and manipulating' history as a threat to world order (EADaily, 2017). Also, in the foreword to S.F. Platonov's *Unified Textbook of Russian History* – a 2017 reprint of a popular textbook from the beginning of the 20th century – a conservative politician and writer, Nikolai Starikov,[4] announces that

> If you want to change the future, get occupied with changing the past. The contemporary falsifiers of history work exactly according to this principle. Exactly because of the future there are attempts to contort the past, to replace values, change facts, give a different interpretation of events. Young ones – they are the goal of falsifiers of history. It is very difficult to redo an adult, but to plant a different interpretation of history in the undeveloped souls and minds is completely possible. And so the heroes of Great Patriotic War are represented almost as criminals, and traitors, such as Vlasov, are painted with heroic colors. (Starikov, 2017, p. 5)[5]

Starikov further claims that these falsifications are the 'deliberate work of Russia's geopolitical opponents', and that those who write them are funded, encouraged and praised by 'the West'. He

also mentions that 'precisely in school patriots have to be brought up, and in the university this education must be "consolidated"' (Starikov, 2017, pp. 5–6).

Further, the established idea of Russia as a reactive rather than military active nation is cherished both implicitly and explicitly: the concept of Russia as a victim and saviour rather than an aggressor of any sort (King, 2014, p. 227). For instance, in presidential speeches it is often emphasized that Russia does not attempt to wage war but rather tries to work as a peacekeeper while other nations refuse do their part in, for instance, disarmament; thus, Russia is forced to defend its interests (President of Russia, 2018a, 2019).

The foundation of 'Russia – My History' theme parks in numerous cities around Russia sends this message of national innocence to Russians (only a limited number of English translations are available). The project is carried out by organizations such as the Patriarchal Council for Culture and the Foundation for Humanitarian Projects and supported by, for instance, Gazprom. The impressive multimedia show takes the visitor all the way from the Middle Ages to the present day and its challenges. The cooperation of the state and the Orthodox Church is – once again – emphasized, and the whole history of Russia is presented as a coherent narrative, excluding any optional interpretations or questions (19th-century historians' views on Russian history and nation building are quoted conspicuously). The modern multimedia helps to create powerful, if somewhat kitschy, images of the nation's great past and its battles and heroes according to the established national-historical canon.[6] Not surprisingly, these theme parks have been criticized by professional Russian scholars for being historically inaccurate and propagandistic by nature (Kurilla, Ivanov and Selin, 2018).

Conclusion

Certain basic premises of the formation of enemy imagery are universal; however, each group and society has its own special

features that can be examined from a historical perspective. In the case of Russia, medieval text production was firmly intertwined with the formation of strong central power and the interests of both ecclesiastic and secular power structures. The Orthodox Church and Christian worldview formed the measuring stick that was used to perceive the reality, including defining and evaluating Otherness.

The medieval perceptions and images of the Others were transferred to centuries to come in at least two overlapping ways. First, the historical image of an infidel archenemy – represented mostly by Tatars – and a courageous Russian hero has been a useful reference to be used not just in situations involving conflicts with Muslims, such as warfare with Turks, but also in cases involving other kinds of enemies, from French to Japanese and German. The medieval imagery is also effectively applied to contemporary conflicts, as in the case of Crimea, which has called Russian power circles to emphasize the importance of the peninsula to Russia by referring to the (myt)historical baptisms performed by Prince Vladimir I (as noted above, the claim is nevertheless complicated since Ukraine can appeal to the same event to defend its case) (President of Russia, 2018b).

Second, medieval dualistic thinking – Orthodox Christian Russians versus infidel enemies – can be said to have been very persistent in Russia's national narrative and (popular) historiography: not just in its original form, popping up from time to time, but transformed into other kinds of oppositions placing Russia against the Others, emphasizing its exceptionality in relation to other political or ideological systems or worldviews.

While a certain amount of exceptionalism is innate to any national narrative, Russia belongs to those nations that have cherished it in earnest. Implicitly, the medieval setting of representing the 'good' against the 'bad' is reflected in the idea that Russia's military actions have always been reactionary and defensive rather than aggressive, and that it has been a victim rather than an initiator in conflicts. This view is uncompromised, as can be seen in reactions to any attempts to reinterpret or re-examine

national history in ways that may present acts of Russia or the Soviet Union, or their troops, in a questionable light – especially in the case of the Second World War.

Notes

[1] Despite a certain historical inaccuracy of the choice, in this chapter 'Russian' is used to refer to people and activities that took place in the area of Kievan Rus' and the principalities that were formed in the Middle Ages in the area nowadays known as Russia.

[2] Even though the reality of ethnic and religious relations was more complex and multifaceted than the black-and-white perceptions presented in the texts, certain discrimination took place in real life, too; for example, in order to properly assimilate, a non-Christian was supposed to prove his loyalty by converting to Orthodox Christianity (Khordakovsky, 2001, pp. 11–18).

[3] Not all the political references to the long history of Russia hit the mark, though: in 8 April 2020, during his meeting with regional heads on combatting the spread of the coronavirus in Russia, President Vladimir Putin announced that 'Our country has suffered through many ordeals: both Pechenegs and Cumans attacked, and Russia got through it all. We will also defeat this coronavirus infection. Together, we can overcome anything' (President of Russia, 2020). This comparison was received with sheer amusement (see e.g. Gutterman, 2020).

[4] Nikolai Starikov (born in 1970) is an economist, active writer and one of the founders and leaders of the conservative-patriotic Great Fatherland Party. In his numerous popular historical books and blog writings – the latter in Russian and English – he has defended Russian national view on history and, for instance, called for respect for Stalin (see e.g. Starikov, 2013).

[5] Vlasov refers to Andrei Vlasov (1901–1946), a Red Army general, who defected and led a so-called Russian Liberation Army, which fought under German command.

[6] As the website of the park project – only available in Russian – announces: 'The creators of the park – that is, historians, artists, filmmakers, designers, specialists in computer graphics – have done everything to move the Russian history from the category of black-white textbook into bright, fascinating and at the same time objective

narrative, so that each visitor would feel complicity to the events of more than thousand-year history of the Fatherland' (Rossiâ – Moâ istoriâ, 2019).

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CHAPTER 3

Evolution of Russia's 'Others' in Presidential Discourse in 2000–2020

Veera Laine

Abstract

This chapter analyses the Others of Russia reoccurring in presidential discourse in 2000–2020. The key speeches reveal three distinctive 'Others' of the Russian state and nation, evolving in space and time: first, an ineffective politician in the 1990s and, later, a corrupt bureaucrat, is framed as a historical and internal Other, whose figure legitimizes the current power. Second, the metaphor of constant competition in international relations describes the Other as an economically stronger, developed Western country, against which Russia's 'backwardness' is mirrored, especially in the early 2000s. As the economic competition becomes harder to win and the quest for national unity intensifies, the emphasis turns to the third Other, the one holding values that are fundamentally different from the Self's. Thus, it is argued that the metaphor of competition/conflict between Russia and its Others has undergone a qualitative transformation in presidential

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rhetoric, reflecting change in Russia's relative strength: instead of the previously admired economic performance, times of conflict show that Russia's true strength vis-à-vis its Others resides in the conservative, moral values and military might.

Keywords: Others, Putin

Introduction: Setting the Stage for State Nationalism

In January 2020, President Vladimir Putin, speaking to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, proposed amendments to be made to the Constitution in order to ensure the sovereignty of the country (President of Russia, 2020). The changes came into force on 4 July – less than seven months after Putin first voiced the initiative. The new Constitution secured the possibility for Putin to continue as a president for two more terms, but it also included other, ideologically loaded statements such as faith in God as a historical heritage of the nation, and protection of traditional family values as the government's task (Gosudarstvennaâ duma, 2020) – reinforcing, in this way, the conservative value basis that had been for years portrayed as distinguishing Russia from 'others'. Thus, the constitutional process demonstrated the swiftness of the president-centred decision-making within Russia's authoritarian system, as well as the full circle in the state administration's 20-year-long endeavour to define the characteristics of the Russian nation in the language of law.

When drafting the Constitution of the Russian Federation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in December 1993, the state authorities wanted to distance the new political circumstances from the Soviet ones by stating that 'no ideology may be established as state or obligatory one'. But the need to create a unified national narrative was acute. From the year 1996 onwards, in particular, President Boris Yeltsin's administration made attempts to engage the society in defining a national 'Russian idea' (Tolz, 1998, pp. 1010–1011). At the time, the presidential administration embraced the civic rhetoric of the nation, emphasizing the duties and rights of Russian citizens (*rossiâne*).

The attempts to enhance national unity this way brought, however, little success: they were criticized in public for not being the task of the presidential administration in the first place, but also their credibility was thin. It was simply not plausible to refer to the great Russian (*rossijskij*) nation that inhabits a strong state when that state was in such an evident state of weakness because of economic crisis, political instability, crime and the brutal war in Chechnya. Moreover, the memory of the Soviet Union as a great power that occupied a significant position in Cold War world politics was still vivid, and contrasted with the new Russian state (Laruelle, 2009, p. 18; Tolz, 1998, p. 1011).

When Vladimir Putin was elected as the president in 2000, his administration started decisively to build the national unity upon the strong state. Now the narrative also gained more credibility in the eyes of the Russian people, to a large extent thanks to the simultaneous processes of remarkable economic growth and centralization of the power structures. At the time, the state conducted policies that framed its vision of the national unity: federal-level programmes for patriotic education were introduced, the status of national symbols, which had remained vague throughout the 1990s, was confirmed with a new law, and measures were taken to enhance the public image of the Russian army. Presidential speeches in the early years of the 2000s stressed the key message: Russia had been weak but now it had to – and would – become strong (President of Russia, 2000).

In the pages that follow, I will analyse the contents of contemporary state nationalism in the presidential discourse from the perspective of othering. Constructing a nation is based on creating boundaries between 'us' and 'them', drawn first and foremost in language but having real political consequences. In this chapter, othering is seen as a dynamic, constantly ongoing process that has a strong temporal aspect: the past affects the representations in the present. The primary material consists of the 21 presidential addresses held at the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, which remain key speeches of Russian politics that have significance for both domestic and international audiences. The selected speeches are intended as top-down messages, but they

nevertheless attempt to tap into views and attitudes already existing in society (see e.g. Kolstø and Blakkisrud, 2018, p. 7). Since 2014, the presidential address to the Federal Assembly has also had legal status as one of the key documents steering the strategic planning of the country (Prezident Rossii, 2014).

Methodologically, the chapter departs from the notion that figurative language plays a crucial role in conceptual and, thus, political change (Schäfer, 2012). In order to map Russia's Others in the material, a qualitative content analysis was applied in two close reading phases. In practice, the material was first read with sensitivity to reoccurring key metaphors and concepts applied in the context of the 'Other'. Analysing the passages where the national 'us' was contrasted to 'them', metaphors such as competition (as world order) and strength (of a nation/state) were detected and manually coded. Then, the temporality of those metaphors was analysed: what implicative elements did these metaphors emphasize in different years, and how did these change?

The chosen time frame covers the emergence of state nationalism in the early 2000s, the presidency of Dmitri Medvedev in 2008–2012, which was perceived more liberal but appeared to be so only in rhetoric, and the so-called 'conservative turn' in Russian politics that intensified after the beginning of Vladimir Putin's third presidential term in 2012. The political significance of each of the speeches is not identical but they are comparable: it is important to note that Medvedev acted as a 'role occupancy' leader whose political status depended on his prime minister, predecessor and successor – Putin (Baturo and Mikhaylov, 2014). In this chapter, the presidential addresses are treated as evidence of the thinking within state power.

In 2000–2020, the address to the Federal Assembly was held each year, except in 2017, when it was postponed until spring 2018 because of the presidential elections. During these years, the speeches followed somewhat similar conventional patterns. In general, domestic matters such as the evaluation of the national economy and socio-economic themes form the main content of the speech. Yet, in certain years, foreign policy message

has dominated the address and, since 2015 in particular, it has been the most important deliverable of the president. Speeches given in the years 2008 and 2014 are similar in tone, as they both reflect the mentality of a country in a war. Whereas the rhetoric in 2009 returned to a more conciliatory mode, since 2014 this has not happened.

State Nationalism and Theories of the Other

This section draws from critical nationalism theory as well as previous studies of boundaries of belonging in international relations. Scholars of nationalism often approach the concept in a broad sense, as a view of the world as an entity of nation states (Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou, 2013, pp. 1–2; Özkırımlı, 2010, pp. 1–3). Their interpretation differs from the analytical use of nationalism in political science, where it is often understood as a political instrument, connected to state legitimacy in particular (Feldmann and Mazepus, 2018; Özkırımlı, 2010, p. 3). I would maintain that the various uses of the concept share the core idea: nationalism is a powerful 'ism' in politics precisely because it is based on a fundamental worldview, intuitively accepted by many.

In the literature discussing national identity in politics, the Other has been defined in many ways. In this chapter, the Other is interpreted as fundamentally different – but not necessarily worse. The image of the Other is understood primarily as means to construct Self: defining 'who we are' is often done by showing 'who we are not' (Harle, 2000, p. 11; Republic.ru, 2019). Sometimes the Other does carry a clear value judgement, but in these cases it should be understood as a certain type of the Other. For instance, the dehumanized Other, posing an existential threat to the Self, is an enemy. The view of Other as different but neutral vis-à-vis the Self is applied, for example, by Iver B. Neumann (1996). Having studied the idea of Europe in the Russian identity formation throughout its history, Neumann stresses the relationship between the Self and the Other instead of just their characteristics. 'Identity does not reside in essential and readily identifiable cultural traits, but in

relations, and the question of where and how borders towards "the Other" should be drawn become crucial' (ibid., pp. 1–2).

Since the process of othering is dynamic, so is the nature of the Other. In her study on the changing representations on Chechnya in Russian public discourse between the first and second Chechnyan wars, Julie Wilhelmsen (2017, p. 206) has depicted how the Other gradually becomes an enemy. According to Wilhelmsen, the representations of Chechnya as an existential terrorist threat during and after the year 1999 in particular served to create an image of a strong and united Russia. Political language and politics are intertwined, and discourses of Others – especially those produced and distributed by state power and having a hegemonic status – frame the sphere of politics.

In the previous literature, Europe or, more generally, the West has been presented as Russia's main or constituent Other (Neumann, 1996, p. 1; Tolz, 2001, p. 69; see also Kati Parppei, Chapter 2, this volume). The idea of Russia's 'Europeanness' has been connected to the modernization of the country: from the 19th-century debates onwards, the key question has been whether Russia should follow the 'West' as a model or seek its own, 'organic' path. Thus, the rhetoric of European/Western Other influences the making of foreign politics, but it also has significance in the domestic policy sphere. The Other functions as a mirror when arguing for the desired direction of domestic developments: the Other might serve as an example as well as a warning.

Finally, it should be noted that, like the Self, the Other in the political discourse is also multilayered. As Ted Hopf (2002, pp. 9–10, 155) points out, there is 'no empirical reason' to believe that the only Other for a state would be another state. In his analysis of the Russian discourses on collective identity in 1999, Hopf maps external, internal and historical Others, the latter of which is represented by various aspects of the USSR (ibid.). Following this line of thought, I would suggest that Russia's Others have both temporal and spatial aspect: they can be identified both inside the country and outside it, and in space but also in time. Moreover, it seems that the historical Other of Russia has become more complex since 1999 and deserves recognition in the analysis.

The Multilayered Others in Presidential Discourse

In political discourse, speaking about a nation as 'us' is truly a widespread metaphor that Michael Billig (1995, pp. 1–2) interprets as a manifestation of banal nationalism. It is indeed an omnipresent strategy in the annual presidential address to the Federal Assembly. But, on these occasions, the president also refers to other in-groups as 'us': sometimes this means the policymakers present at the event, his 'colleagues' in this sense. As John Wilson (1991, pp. 48–50) has pointed out, politicians may benefit from the 'exclusive usage' of the pronoun 'us', meaning that the speaker does not necessarily plan to personally take action he or she describes 'we' should take. It is a rhetorical tool intended to enhance the feeling of belonging and to blur the concrete responsibility of the subject. In the following, I will trace the various Others, portrayed against this national 'us', and their development over time.

'It was not we who built it': the Other from the past

As was described at the beginning of this chapter, the difficulties of the 1990s framed the circumstances in which Putin's administration begun their work to create the new national narrative. The experience of the 1990s among the people was an important factor in legitimizing Putin's power, especially during his first term in presidential office. As Olga Malinova (2020, p. 1) depicts, 'the opposition between the "turbulent 1990s" and the "stable 2000s" is an oft-used trope' in Russian public discourse.

The presidential rhetoric emphasized the contrast between the representations of those periods of time in Russian history (ibid.). It was beneficial for the state administration to maintain and even strengthen the narrative of the 'unstable' 1990s and the 2000s of 'restoring order', and, by unifying this narrative of the recent past, the positive or optimistic perceptions that the Russian people had in the 1990s – simultaneously with the negative and fearful ones – became forgotten in the hegemonic discourse. According to Malinova, Putin's critique of his predecessors was cautious at the

beginning of his presidency, and understandably so, as he himself was brought to power by them.

Particularly in his first two speeches to the Federal Assembly, Putin stresses the necessity to restore the trust of the state among the people (President of Russia, 2000, 2001, 2006). Serguei Oushakine (2009, pp. 34–35, 261) has described how the disillusionment of the Soviet reality had turned into a deep distrust among 'us', the people, towards 'them' – the politicians on the TV, for example. The state administration, most likely, recognized the origins of the 'trauma' Oushakine depicts. As a result, in Putin's parlance, the Other is not the politician in the present but the politician in the past. Speaking in the passive voice, Putin suggests that 'they' had made promises but not kept them, and 'they' had made mistakes that 'we' would not repeat (President of Russia, 2000).

In the Soviet Union, in highly ritualistic political discourse the new leader would always mark the distinction between him and his predecessors by introducing new concepts or slogans, and sometimes condemning past policies, stressing in this way the beginning of the new era (Ruutu, 2010, pp. 62–71). Certainly, there is similar quest for legitimacy in the way Putin speaks about the past. Malinova explains that, when stressing the contrast between his policy and the previous one, Putin used populist rhetoric combining 'a demonstration of "care" about the people with implicit criticism of "others" among the political elite'. Portraying the politicians of the 1990s as Others, however, remains in Putin's rhetoric long after the beginning of his presidency. With time, these references become also more explicit:

> The changes of the early 1990s were a time of great hopes for millions of people, but neither the authorities nor business fulfilled these hopes. Moreover, some members of these groups pursued their own personal enrichment in a way such as had never been seen before in our country's history, at the expense of the majority of our citizens and in disregard for the norms of law and morality. (President of Russia, 2006)

In Putin's rhetoric especially, the Other of the past develops from the dishonest and ineffective politician of the 1990s towards the

corrupt, selfish official of the present day. There are several examples in the 2000s and 2010s mentioning this type, especially with regard to the discussion on anti-corruption measures. The corrupt officials provide a logical continuation of the politicians of the 1990s in the presidential rhetoric: they are the Others that legitimate the presidential power, and thus provide material for the populist claims. In-between the honest people and the high leadership of the country, there are middle-level bureaucrats, civil servants and officials, not all of whom are honest (President of Russia, 2016). In a way, the rhetoric leans on an old Russian proverb of the 'good tsar and bad boyars', the idea of which is often reflected in the surveys of institutional trust among Russians: the president enjoys, quite consistently, wider approval among the citizens than the State Duma, government or regional policymakers do (Levada-Center, 2020). The conventions of the speech to the Federal Assembly assist the president in this rhetorical strategy as they provide possibilities to give advice, assignments and critique to local and regional authorities.

When President Dmitri Medvedev introduced his ideas for comprehensive modernization of the Russian state, economy and society in November 2009, he reminded the Federal Assembly that:

> [t]he foundation of my vision for the future is the firm conviction that Russia can and must become a global power on a completely new basis. Our country's prestige and national prosperity cannot rest forever on past achievements. After all, the oil and gas production facilities that generate most of our budget revenue, the nuclear weapons that guarantee our security, and our industrial and utilities infrastructure – most of this was built by Soviet specialists. In other words, it was not we who built it. (President of Russia, 2009a)

In this way, Medvedev distanced the Soviet actors from 'us', Russians of the present, in order to enhance the legitimacy of his future policy initiatives. Medvedev's modernization speech is another example of 'new leader' rhetoric, distinguishing the past from the future he brings about. In the material of this chapter, Medvedev's speeches in 2009–2011 differ significantly from the addresses given before and after that in their clear future

orientation. Medvedev's essay describing the modernization project carried the title 'Russia, Forward' (President of Russia, 2009b).

As a part of his re-election campaign in early 2012, Putin published a series of newspaper articles setting his political agenda regarding, for example, nationality politics, economics and social policy of the country (Komsomol′skaâ pravda, 2012; Nezavisimaâ gazeta, 2012; Vedomosti, 2012), but in 2018 new political initiatives were not introduced. In 2018, before the presidential elections, Putin described his speech to the Federal Assembly as a landmark event, 'just as the times we are living in, when the choices we make and every step we take are set to shape the future of our country for decades to come' (President of Russia, 2018). Despite the rhetoric of a 'turning point', the speech did not contain significant policy initiatives. Since 2012 in particular, Putin's parlance has been rich in the (selective) references to history but much more limited in future visions. Coming closer to the present day, the legitimacy claims that rest on the internal, historical Others have partly lost their political currency as the current regime has exercised state power for two decades: with time, the experience of the 1990s becomes more distant. In addition, the persistent portrayal of a corrupt, inefficient middle-level official as an internal Other may lead to the interpretation that the highest leadership of the country is not able to solve the problem.

'We are losing out in competition': the Other ahead of us

Throughout the past two decades, creating a 'strong and rich' Russia has been a crucial goal in the presidential speeches. Russia's strength/might (*sila*) is expressed in relation to its Others, because the main condition in which it is needed is the political or economic competition against them. As Paul Chilton and George Lakoff (1995, pp. 39–41, 44–45) describe, portraying foreign relations primarily as competition – race, fight or game – in political language stems from the conceptual metaphor that the (nation) state is a person. According to Andreas Musolff (2018, pp. 251,

261), the metaphorical personification of a state in this way creates an image of 'a unified social collective that is able to speak with one voice and act as a singular, independent agent'. Chilton and Lakoff (1995, p. 43) explain that conceptualizing the nation as a person is connected to the metaphor of a 'body-politic': from this perspective, the state aspires to be healthy and strong. With the reference to a 'body', health translates into national wealth, and strength into military force. Rieke Schäfer (2012) reminds us that metaphors are temporal: like political key concepts, they, too, change over time. The metaphorical force of a certain utterance may increase or decrease, and the emphasis on simultaneous, implicative elements that a metaphor applies may vary.

From the very beginning of his presidential term, Putin was concerned with the global competition and Russia's position in it. In his perception, the military confrontation of the Cold War had ended, but the competition of global markets had replaced it. In 2002, he explained the logic explicitly:

> Competition has indeed become global. In the period of weakness – of our weakness – we had to give up many niches on the international market. And they were immediately occupied by others. … The conclusion is obvious: in the world today, no one intends to be hostile towards us – no one wants this or needs it. But no one is particularly waiting for us either. No one is going to help us especially. We need to fight for a place in the 'economic sun' ourselves. (President of Russia, 2002)

Putin's use of the competition metaphor highlights how the 'fight' had become qualitatively different. The Others in this competition were rarely named, but the context suggest that they were the Western market economy countries that were economically more developed and integrated. Despite those same countries being portrayed as exemplary models of modernization (Rutland, 2016, p. 337), in Putin's parlance Russia must always follow its own path. In this way, the presidential rhetoric reflects a centuries-old tradition of the Russian nationalist discourses. The views of the 'backwardness' of Russia in relation to Europe have been

countered with arguments of Russian ancient cultural heritage and a morally superior position already arising from it before the formation of Slavophiles' and Westernisers' currents of thought (Neumann, 1996, pp. 26, 30; Ryazanova-Clarke, 2012).

In the speech of 2002, the resentment towards the Other in this harsh competition arose from the idea that they had occupied Russia's 'natural' niches in the world economy, that Russia's expectations of the post-Cold War economic reality had not been met, and that Russia was not included in the organizations where global trade was regulated (President of Russia, 2002). Thus, the Other is also held responsible for the difficult situation in which Russia had found itself. Throughout the material of this study, there is little self-criticism regarding the policy decisions made by the current regime. When the president discusses inefficiencies, or cases where the goals set earlier were not met, their root causes are usually not detailed. An exception in this regard is Medvedev's 'modernization speech' in 2009, in which he explicitly states that '[w]e should not lay the blame [on Russia's economic downturn] on the outside world alone, however. We need to recognise that we have not done enough over these last years to resolve the problems we inherited from the past' (President of Russia, 2009a).

In the early 2000s, strength, needed in the competition with Others, would follow from restoring order and creating stable conditions for economic growth. One of the conceptual innovations during Putin's first term in presidential office was the concept of stability (*stabil'nost'*) that he started to use extensively from the year 2001 onwards. The slogan was not an end in itself but a means: stability was needed in order to become strong. Still, in 2000, Putin had explained that 'Russia needs an economic system which is competitive, effective and socially just, which ensures stable political development', and continued that 'a stable economy is the main guarantor of a democratic society, and the very foundation of a strong nation that is respected in the world' (President of Russia, 2000). Three years later, in 2003, Putin formulated the same idea more decisively:

> Now we must take the next step and focus all our decisions and all our action on ensuring that in a not too far off future, Russia will take its recognised place among the ranks of the truly strong, economically advanced and influential nations. This is an entirely new challenge we must take up, and it represents an entirely new stage in our country's development. (President of Russia, 2003)

Further, he added that the 'ultimate goal should be to return Russia to its place among the prosperous, developed, strong and respected nations'. Whereas the references to Russia as a strong country had been rather pragmatic in 2000–2002, in 2003 the view was motivated differently: Russians should not forget their long history, the victims and sacrifice, the historic fate of their country and the way Russia had continuously emerged as a strong nation. Presenting Russia's distinct history as a justifying cause for restoring strength in the global competition underlines the interpretation that this is the position Russia deserves, which can be seen influencing the relationship between Russia and the Others ahead in the global economic competition.

During Putin's first presidential term, the competition metaphor had an economic character but after that it was not restricted to world markets anymore. Simultaneously, the rhetoric on how to achieve strength as well as its characteristics evolved. Putin's key slogan in the early 2000s, stability, had been abandoned by the year 2008. In his first speech to the Federal Assembly, President Dmitri Medvedev stated that Russia had become strong 'economically and politically' (President of Russia, 2008). The speech reflected in tone and content the war in Georgia that had taken place the previous month; Medvedev stressed the strength and unity of the country, which were not to be questioned.

Medvedev's examples illustrate how political, economic, military and 'moral' strength started to grow apart in presidential rhetoric. Russia's military strength was no longer depicted as a goal; instead, it had been achieved, tested and proven in the war (ibid.). However, a year later, Medvedev did not mince his words when he described Russia's economic backwardness, even weakness, but the rhetoric of this particular address was aimed at defending the

modernization project (President of Russia, 2009a). In the war rhetoric of Russian presidents, the Others in the global competition might have had the lead in an economic sense, but Russia's strengths lay elsewhere. In the spring of 2014, after the popular unrest in Ukraine had led to an open conflict between the people and President Yanukovych's regime, Russia invaded Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine started. The events shook the political, economic and social realities in Russia, Ukraine and the whole of Europe, and led to a further deterioration between the 'East' and the 'West' in international politics. In December 2014, Putin's rhetoric was that of a leader of a country at war:

> No one will ever attain military superiority over Russia. We have a modern and combat ready army. As they now put it, a polite, but formidable army. We have the strength, will and courage to protect our freedom. … We will never enter the path of self-isolation, xenophobia, suspicion and the search for enemies. All this is evidence of weakness, while we are strong and confident. (President of Russia, 2014)

The war rhetoric persisted after 2014. In Putin's parlance, the hard times in the recent years were trials that 'have made us even stronger, truly stronger' (President of Russia, 2016). In 2020, referring to nuclear weapons, Putin proclaimed that Russia was leading the competition:

> [F]or the first time in the history of nuclear missile weapons, including the Soviet period and modern times, we are not catching up with anyone, but, on the contrary, other leading states have yet to create the weapons that Russia already possesses. (President of Russia, 2020)

Overall, the relationship with the Others ahead in the competition is complex: they mistreat Russia, but they are nevertheless valuable as partners. The ambiguous relationship with the American Other, especially, can be seen in Putin's parlance, where words expressing cooperation or good relations have often been used in a sarcastic manner, and increasingly so after 2014. 'Our partners'

imposing sanctions; 'our colleagues' who consider Russia an adversary; 'our American friends' who influence Russia's relations with its neighbours, 'either openly or behind the scenes' (President of Russia, 2014, 2016). Olga Malinova (2019, p. 232) has noted that, after 2014, Putin's statements of the American Other contained both criticism and admiration, and, being 'emotionally loaded' in such a way, she adds, the statements indicate the significance of the American Other to the Self. Interestingly, Malinova compares the complex American Other to the Chinese Other, the latter of which is described with respect but with no similar passion. In Malinova's material, China is mentioned a couple of times as 'an economic competitor' (ibid., p. 232.), but in the addresses to the Federal Assembly China is not seriously discussed, not even after 2014. The few references describe the partnership with China briefly as comprehensive, strategic or mutually beneficial (President of Russia, 2016, 2018, 2019). Thus, the main, constituent and significant Other ahead of Russia in the global, dynamic competition is either the loosely defined European or the American Other.

'The wolf knows who to eat': the Other that threatens us

According to Putin's perception, Russia in the early 2000s was witnessing not only competition in the economic sphere but also direct external aggression, even existential threat. Conflict and war in Chechnya were not described as separatism but as a branch of international terrorism – it was an external Other, not an internal one, even if the two were connected (President of Russia, 2000). Terrorism is the main enemy in presidential discourse throughout the study period, even if the forms it took changed over time. Clearly, it is the evil that cannot in any circumstances be part of 'us': it is the dehumanized enemy, posing an existential threat. However, there are Others that are not depicted as enemies but which also can be threatening and which definitely remain fundamentally different from the Self. The 'threatening Others' will be discussed next.

In his first speech to the Federal Assembly as president, Putin noted that Russia had found itself 'face to face with force that

strive towards a geopolitical reorganisation of the world'. Again, these forces are not explicitly named but the position is clear: external forces either threat Russia's 'state sovereignty and territorial integrity' or assist those who do so (President of Russia, 2000). In Putin's rhetoric, the Others that pose a threat – without necessarily being enemies – either dismiss the terrorist threat and therefore do not take the needed action, or collude with the terrorists. After the short optimistic phase in US–Russian relations had passed and the Russian state leadership had become disillusioned with the future prospects of the common war against terrorism, Putin lamented that '[c]ertain countries sometimes use their strong and well-armed national armies to increase their zones of strategic influence rather than fighting these evils we all face' (President of Russia, 2003).

Since the beginning of Putin's third term in presidential office, he has connected the memory of Russia's past wars to the conflicts of present, which is reflected in the rhetoric of the Other as well. Most often the references to the past war concern the Second World War, but in 2006 Putin likened the memory of the veterans of the Great Patriotic War to the experiences of the Cold War arms race. He explained the importance of maintaining the readiness of the armed forces as the biggest lesson learned from the Second World War, and, after comparing military spending in other countries, noted:

> But this means that we also need to build our home and make it strong and well protected. We see, after all, what is going on in the world. The wolf knows who to eat, as the saying goes. It knows who to eat and is not about to listen to anyone, it seems. (President of Russia, 2006)

Animal metaphors are often applied in the realm of international relations. In this context, the wolf represents the enemy. Lara Ryazanova-Clarke (2012, p. 12), analysing Kremlin ideologist Vladislav Surkov's programmatic speech from the year 2006, highlights his use of a metaphor of the world as a spiderweb where Russia's sovereignty depends on its position – whether it is a spider

or a fly. Putin's metaphorical wolf that threatens to eat others portrays the world in a similar way: as a place of constant competition and rivalry, where only the winner survives.

In the speech that followed the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Putin called the Western sanctions a 'policy of containment', adding that they would have been implemented even without any conflict because 'whenever someone thinks that Russia has become too strong or independent, these tools are quickly put into use'. In what follows, Putin connects the sanctions to claims of former allies supporting separatism from abroad or, more precisely, 'from across the pond' (he does not name the United States in this passage). Both are intended to keep Russia weak and encourage her disintegration, which will not work, '[j]ust as it did not work for Hitler with his people-hating ideas, who set out to destroy Russia and push us back beyond the Urals. Everyone should remember how it ended' (President of Russia, 2014). The idea of foreign forces aiming at Russia's disintegration features strongly in the writings of Russian philosopher Ivan Il′in, as Katri Pynnöniemi's Chapter 4 in this volume shows.

In December 2015, after Turkish air forces had shot down a Russian aircraft near the Syrian border in November, Putin gave a furious speech to the Federal Assembly. He condemned the actions of the Turkish government and accused them of cooperating with terrorists, and drew, again, a parallel between the Second World War and the war against terrorism:

> Unwillingness to join forces against Nazism in the 20th century cost us millions of lives in the bloodiest world war in human history. Today we have again come face to face with a destructive and barbarous ideology, and we must not allow these modern-day dark forces to attain their goals. We must stop our debates and forget our differences to build a common anti-terrorist front that will act in line with international law and under the UN aegis. (President of Russia, 2015)

This logic prevails in the speeches up to the present day. Even if the Other – the United States, backed by European countries –

would not directly threaten Russia, it aims to weaken Russia and, by doing so, assists the enemy. However, in 2018, Russia's new military capabilities were discussed in detail, and in 2019 Putin dedicated a long passage to condemn the withdrawal of the United States from the landmark arms control agreement, the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. In this speech, it was clearly stated that the weapons of the US pose a threat to Russia – even when the country itself is still referred to as a partner (President of Russia, 2019).

In Putin's discourse in the 2010s, Russia, unlike its Others, is willing to, capable of and morally fit for fighting the evil. In a similar vein, the wartime rhetoric – explicitly in 2008 and, perhaps, more ambiguously since 2014 – stresses that hard times have proven Russia's strength and unity. The evolving basis of the latter, national unity, will be discussed next.

'The Amoral International': the Other with different values

After the so-called Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, the project to enhance national unity gained new momentum. In early 2005, the need for a state-backed youth organization was voiced within the state administration, and some months later, the movement, called Naši, was created to fight the liberal tendencies among the youth (see Jussi Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume). The same year, a new public holiday, the Day of National Unity, was announced to commemorate the popular mobilization of Muscovites in 1612, led by Prince Dmitrij Požarskij and Merchant Kuzma Minin, to fight the foreign, Polish-Lithuanian invaders. The chosen date, 4 November, replaced the Day of Constitution as well as the Day of Accord and Reconciliation, by which name the former Day of Revolution had been known in the 1990s (Zuev, 2013, p. 108). The first groups to celebrate the new holiday were various nationalists organizing 'Russian marches'. Since then, the marches have focused mostly on anti-immigrant claims, but, as Denis Zuev (ibid., p. 103) notes, the 'myth of national salvation from the West' inspired the early organizers of the event, such as

Aleksandr Dugin. The introduction of these symbolic measures reflects the trend of portraying the West as the constituent Other, as well as the increasing emphasis on the external threat.

Around the same time, the references to the shared values of the Russian nation became more commonplace in presidential rhetoric. A close reading of the addresses in 2000–2020 suggests that those values have undergone a significant change over the past two decades. In 2000, Putin was already mentioning that 'we have had and continue to have' common values, but did not explain what they actually were (President of Russia, 2000). In 2005, he described Russia as a major European power, and explained the values of Russian society accordingly: 'Achieved through much suffering by European culture, the ideals of freedom, human rights, justice and democracy have for many centuries been our society's determining values' (President of Russia, 2005). The following year, Vladislav Surkov, presidential advisor at the time, framed human rights and democracy as negatively loaded propaganda of the 'West' (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2012) – a revision that became visible at large in the Kremlin's discourse and paved way for Surkov's conceptual innovation, 'sovereign democracy', to be the distinctively Russian alternative for political modernization. The turn was swift: in 2007, the European origin of the Russian value basis was no longer mentioned. Instead, Putin elevated the significance of 'spiritual unity of the people and the moral values that unite us' to being as important for development as political and economic stability (President of Russia, 2007). In 2008, Medvedev listed Russia's values as consisting of justice and freedom, welfare, dignity of human life, interethnic peace, and patriotism. This set of values was still rather liberal, at least in the way Medvedev interpreted them, but he no longer emphasized their common European roots (Baturo and Mikhaylov, 2014, p. 973).

Thus, the revision from shared European values towards distinct Russian values as Russia's strength started gradually from the mid-2000s. Rhetorically, the biggest change took place in 2012, after the beginning of Vladimir Putin's third term in the presidential office. From then on, presidential discourse consistently stressed a national narrative that was based on a shared set of traditional,

conservative Russian values, portrayed against an external Other. The massive street protests against electoral fraud and Putin's regime in the big cities of Russia in 2011–2012 functioned as a significant driver for the change. During the spring and summer of 2012, several measures were taken in order to limit civic participation and political contention in society. At the same time, a state-supported media campaign against migrants took off on national, state-controlled television (Tolz, 2017). Until around late 2013, migrants were portrayed as Russia's internal Other in the media, but this aspect was not visible in presidential rhetoric. However, in one of the newspaper articles of Putin's presidential campaign in 2012, dealing with nationality policy, Putin very clearly condemned 'Western' migration policies. Additionally, he stated that Russian identity rested upon a shared 'cultural code', and that the basis of the Russian 'state-civilisation' (*gosudarstvo-civilizaciâ*) lay within its shared culture and values (Nezavisimaâ gazeta, 2012). It is important to note that this change in discourses also took place on levels in the state discourse other than just the presidential one (Østbø, 2017). The traditional Russian 'spiritual-moral' values became intrinsically connected to national security: Jardar Østbø speaks about the 'securitization' of those values after 2013 especially. One implication of this development can be found in the Strategy on National Security, confirmed by the president on 31 December 2015, where 'preserving and enhancing (*sohranenie i priumnoženie*)' the traditional values was mentioned as a 'strategic objective' of national security in the cultural sphere. In this document, the values were defined as including:

> the priority of the spiritual over the material, protection of human life and of human rights and freedoms, the family, creative labor, service to the homeland, the norms of morals and morality, humanism, charity, fairness, mutual assistance, collectivism, the historical unity of the peoples of Russia, and the continuity of our motherland's history. (Rossijskaâ gazeta, 2015)

After 2013, the deteriorating relationship with the West added nuances to the understanding of the liberal, non-traditional or

even 'amoral' Other in both external and internal terms. In 2013, Putin called the people who are 'devoid of culture and respect for traditions, both their own and those of others', an 'Amoral International'. The remark is connected to the discussion on ethnic tensions, which were at the time of that address extremely high. The internal Other here refers to radical ethnonationalists who were seriously challenging the narrative of the (multi)national unity of the Russian people, but the internal Other that does not share the common value basis can also be someone pursuing the interests of a foreign country or acting against Russia's interest (the 'fifth column').

The rhetorical change in 2012 extended to the representation of external Other. As was described above, in the early 2000s, the presidential discourse portrayed global economic competition as a certain type of continuum of the Cold War political competition. In 2012, Putin introduced a new transformation: the global competition is no longer purely economic. Instead, in the era of globalization and intensifying struggle for resources in particular, the selection of future leaders 'will depend not only on the economic potential, but primarily on the will of each nation, on its inner energy which Lev Gumilev termed "passionarity": the ability to move forward and to embrace change'. Putin added that in this 'new balance of economic, civilisational and military forces' Russia needed to preserve national and spiritual identity (President of Russia, 2012). Gumilev, a conservative philosopher of the Eurasianist current to whom Putin referred, developed his theory of ethnogenesis upon the notion that 'passionarity' (*passionarnost'*), 'the ability of single-minded super-efforts', could characterize not only an individual but an entire ethnos (Titov, 2005, p. 52).

Marlene Laruelle (2016, p. 293) argues that the Kremlin has developed an 'anti-Western European civilisation' narrative, which presents Russia as definitely a European country but one that has chosen not to follow the Western path of development. This mirrors in a way the Russian discourses in the first third of the 19th century, when the French Revolution had turned the Russian debate on Europe around. During the reformist period of Peter

the Great, the modernizing debates insisted that Russia was European, and that Europe geographically extended to the Urals. As Neumann (1996, pp. 11–13) notes, the tsar managed to marginalize the resisting views, arising for example from within the Orthodox Church. After the Decembrist uprisings, the state interpreted the European movement away from enlightened despotism as a betrayal of the ideals once commonly held by all the monarchs of Europe and by their dependents (ibid.). In this way, the change in Putin's rhetoric – from the common European values towards the idea of Europe as Other that 'equates good with evil' (President of Russia, 2013) – reflects historical traits of understanding Europe as fundamentally different, even against the background of Russia's Europeanness. Thus, in the Russian perception after 2012, the European countries might still be the Others that are ahead of economic competition, but they have lost their 'original', Christian European identity and have now become Others possessing different values.

> If for some European countries national pride is a long-forgotten concept and sovereignty is too much of a luxury, true sovereignty for Russia is absolutely necessary for survival. Primarily, we should realise this as a nation. I would like to emphasise this: either we remain a sovereign nation, or we dissolve without a trace and lose our identity. Of course, other countries need to understand this, too. (President of Russia, 2014)

Interestingly, the presidential rhetoric portrays the Other with different values always as a Western country. For example, the Russian–Chinese 'comprehensive strategic partnership' works for ensuring international stability, but any value-based mutual understanding between the two countries is not discussed in those contexts (President of Russia, 2016, 2018). All in all, references to any other continents or countries than Western ones are brief and superfluous. Olga Malinova (2019, pp. 237–238) concludes in her analysis on American and Chinese Others in Russian political discourse in 2012–2014 that 'the pivot to the East' in Russian politics has not translated into replacing the West as the most important Significant Other for Russia.

The value-based Other is both external and internal, and those are often entangled: the internal Other is accused of supporting causes 'foreign to Russia'. Alongside the change in rhetoric about values, the actual policies of excluding Others with 'non-traditional' values have strengthened. In his speech to the Federal Assembly in April 2005, Putin cited in length the words of conservative philosopher Ivan Il′in, stating that the state power should not 'intervene in moral, family and daily private life' (President of Russia, 2005). Less than a decade later, the state leadership had clearly abandoned this idea of 'not intervening' in the private life of the citizens. Maria Engström (2014, pp. 356–357) has explained the so-called 'conservative turn' in 2012 as the 're-ideologisation' of Russian domestic, foreign and security politics, in which the state authorities started to lean on already existing but marginal interpretations of Russian messianism. The rhetoric of the Russian Orthodox Church and the state became gradually more intertwined, and, after 2013 especially, the close relationship has been translated into legislative processes. In June 2013, offences against believers' feelings were made punishable by imprisonment, and in February 2017 the penalties for domestic violence were eased – both changes had been, at least partly, concessions to the Russian Orthodox Church (Laine and Saarelainen, 2017, pp. 16–17). Moreover, the repression of gender and sexual minorities in the country has increased, as they represent 'non-traditional' values, portrayed as 'foreign' to Russia. Among the constitutional amendments of 2020, there was a statement that marriage as 'a union of a man and a woman' needs to be protected (Gosudarstvennaâ duma, 2020).

A key feature of the unifying national narrative, patriotism, has remained at the core of the presidential rhetoric, gaining gradually more importance. After 2014, Putin repeatedly declared that he saw patriotism as a unifying idea, or 'the national idea', for all Russians (RBK, 2016). Federal-level patriotic education programmes with their increasing funding, the emergence of various local, private or semi-official patriotic clubs and organizations, and the endeavours of the Russian Orthodox Church in the domestic and foreign policy sphere (Knorre, 2018), as well as the consistency

with which patriotic ideas have been circulated in the official discourse, have probably all contributed to the vision Putin shared with the Federal Assembly in 2016:

> Our people have united around patriotic values. We see this unity and we should thank them for it. They have united around these values not because everyone is happy and they have no demands, on the contrary, there is no shortage of problems and difficulties. But people have an understanding of their causes and, most importantly, are confident that together we can overcome these problems. It is this readiness to work for our country's sake and this sincere and deep-seated concern for Russia that form the foundation of this unity we see. (President of Russia, 2016)

Interestingly, in Putin's parlance the much-needed unity of the people had been achieved by 2016. The rhetorical change in 2012 was inspired by the intensified concern, even fear, of revolutionary actions in the domestic arena. Often described as the moment of 'conservative turn' in Russia (Feldmann and Mazepus, 2018), the tone describing the value basis of the nation changed: first, references to the common European heritage of those values, commonplace until mid-2000s, was omitted, and, second, the traditional values that united the Russian nation were portrayed to be under threat, so they had to be defended. Since then, the references to the key values of the Russian nation have remained rather consistent. Rhetorically, however, the future challenges to national unity may be more difficult to address once that unity has been claimed to be achieved. Moreover, a turn away from these conservative values, a move that could have still been possible earlier in the 2000s, seems unthinkable now that they have been introduced in the legislative language of the state at the level of the Constitution.

Concluding Remarks: from Stability to Morality

During the past two decades, the state leadership has portrayed Russia's Others in the context of internal political legitimacy on the one hand and global politics on the other. Since 2000, the

metaphor of international relations as constant competition has grown from purely economic in nature towards a distinctive form of economic, military and 'moral' competition. The Other, who was first ahead in the competition, later became the Other taking the side of the enemy. However, the Other is not pronounced to be the enemy: Russia's only explicit enemy is terrorism (both inside the country and outside it). Instead, Others are either those who are not willing to assist Russia or those who assist the terrorists. The rhetoric of competition is connected to the metaphors of weak and strong Russia, which are always relational. In the economic competition, Russia's Others were stronger than Russia, and 'stability' and 'modernization' were presented as conceptual innovations, indicating how to act against them. But, with time, it became clearly pronounced that Russia is stronger in a military and moral sense – and those are the characteristics that count when the competition transforms into a conflict, that is, after 2008 especially.

At the beginning of the 2000s, the past experience of the 1990s was often referred to as an internal, historical Other. Then, the critique of the politicians in the 1990s was a way to enhance the legitimacy of the new leader, but, with time, the same strategy was applied to the internal Other as a corrupt, dishonest and selfish 'middleman' of Russian politics. This rhetoric represents a certain type of populist continuum: there is someone other than the president himself to blame for the flaws of domestic politics. Yet, portraying the 1990s as a historical Other remains a central theme throughout the study period, even if the references to the past in general change: whereas Dmitri Medvedev spoke vividly about Russia's future still in 2009, Vladimir Putin, who followed him, leaned on the country's great past, and past wars in particular, omitting proposals for the bright future.

Finally, the perhaps most significant change in the Others of Russia during the study period is the emergence of the Other as possessing different values. In the early 2000s, the West was still depicted as Russia's Other, mainly in the context of the critically important economic competition. Gradually, from the mid-2000s onwards, the state administration introduced new symbolic

policies to stress external threat, and, around the same time, the addresses to the Federal Assembly started to reflect shared values as the key guarantee for it. Interestingly, however, those values were not explicitly portrayed as fundamentally different from the values of the Other until 2012. But then, and especially after 2013, the addresses repeatedly pointed out that the Other held a different set of values, and, more precisely, it abandoned the values that once were common to Russia and Europe.

The conservative emphasis of the presidential rhetoric arose from domestic drivers, but it has certainly been amplified by the difficulties in the foreign policy sphere. It is rather difficult to evaluate how persistent (or how widely embraced) the idea of the Other holding fundamentally different values actually is. It is noteworthy that the change from the rather liberal understanding of common values to traditional, conservative ones in the presidential discourse was relatively abrupt – for instance, references regarding the 'Europeanness' of the Russian values disappeared from presidential discourse between the years 2005 and 2007. So, theoretically, a change towards an opposite direction could be implemented in a similar manner. But recent years have shown that any possibility of reversing this rhetoric has become unlikely for at least two reasons. First, the president has stated that the shared values have, by now, united the Russian nation against the external threat, and that the 'moral' strength of the national Self against its Other has been achieved. Second, the ideological tones have been brought into the sphere of Russian legislation, including the Constitution, which may prove essential in the future development of the country.

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CHAPTER 4

Ivan Il′in and the Kremlin's Strategic Communication of Threats

Evil, Worthy and Hidden Enemies

Katri Pynnöniemi

Abstract

Enemy images can be thought of as scripts that articulate a logic of enmity and identify a source of threat towards the Self. In this chapter, Russian émigré philosopher Ivan Il′in's identification of Russia's enemies are used as a reference point in the analysis of the Kremlin's strategic communication of threats. The analysis opens up three different but complementary interpretations of threats and risks for Russia's state security.

Keywords: Enemy images, strategic communication, Ivan Il′in

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Introduction: the Return of Philosopher Ivan Il′in

The conservative turn in Russian politics takes pride in a number of Russian philosophers and thinkers, among them a Russian religious-philosopher Ivan Il′in (1883–1954). For Russian nationalists and monarchists, Il′in is a visionary who could foretell Russia's resurrection and mission in the world. For government officials, Il′in recalled a duty towards the state and love for Russia. Taken together, these storylines helped in consolidating the image of a great power Russia. On top of that, Il′in has been branded as President Putin's 'first philosophical love', whose writings have become obligatory reading for the political elite in Russia (Eltchaninoff, 2017, p. 1; Kommersant, 2006a; Surnačeva, 2014). Explaining this phenomenon, Timothy Snyder (2018, p. 2) argues that 'Il′in's works have helped Russian elites to portray the Ukraine, Europe, and the United States as existential dangers to Russia'. With this, Snyder refers to 'some of Il′in's more specific ideas about geopolitics' that the Kremlin has used in reorienting the state priorities from political and economic reforms into the 'export of virtue abroad' (Snyder, 2018, p. 2).

Snyder traces the re-emergence of Il′in to the year 2005, when Il′in first appeared in Putin's annual speech to the Federation Council. This was the 'sovereign democracy' speech where Putin defended Russia's exceptionalism against the universal adoption of democratic governance principles. The democratic norms will be realized in Russia, taking into account 'our historic, geopolitical and other particularities', Putin asserted. By citing Il′in, Putin wanted to remind the audience about the limits of state power.

> State power, wrote the great Russian philosopher Ivan Il′in, 'has its own limits defined by the fact that it is authority that reaches people from outside … State power cannot oversee and dictate the creative states of the soul and mind, the inner states of love, freedom and goodwill. The state cannot demand from its citizens faith, prayer, love, goodness and conviction. It cannot regulate scientific, religious and artistic creation … It should not intervene in moral, family and daily private life, and only when extremely

> necessary should it impinge on people's economic initiative and creativity'. Let us not forget this. (President of Russia, 2005)

However, 10 years later, the National Security Strategy (Rossijskaâ gazeta, 2015) defined protection of 'traditional Russian values' as part of the state security policy. This move, together with the targeting of activists on the basis of what they have written on social media, comes in stark contrast to the above message.

The appearance of Il′in's name in the 2005 presidential address caught the attention of researchers who sought to understand Putin's thinking and the role of conservative ideas in Russia's strategic decision-making (Eltchaninoff, 2017; Hill and Gaddy, 2013). Some researchers, most notably Snyder (2018, pp. 8–10), have argued that, with Il′in, fascist ideas were integrated into the Kremlin's politics, while others, for example Laruelle (2019, p. 4), have called for caution in comparing Putin's Russia with Hitler's Germany. In Laruelle's view (2018, p. 6), Il′in has been an inspiration for a pro-Orthodox, pro-White emigration, and pro-Romanov faction in the Russian elite, but 'it is wrong to claim he has become the main philosophical authority of the presidential administration'. This is because 'the Putin regime has demonstrated a vivid ability to be context-sensitive and continually reinvent itself', Laruelle explains (2018, p. 5). This is important to keep in mind when analysing Il′in's role and importance in current Russian politics.

In Russia, the Kremlin's interest towards Il′in has been noted in the media (Kommersant, 2006b; Surnačeva, 2014; Vesti, 2009). Yet, scholarly interest in Russia has not focused on his political weight (or lack of it) but on Il′in's contribution to the Russian and European philosophical tradition. It is in this latter context that contradictions and dead ends in Il′in's political texts are evaluated together with their importance for present-day Russia. Professor Yuri Lisitsa, who collected Il′in's philosophical and other texts into 30 volumes, wrote Il′in's necrology for the 2005 reburial and was involved in the return of Il′in's archive to Russia, emphasized in a 2015 interview that Il′in was first and foremost a philosopher, although his journalistic texts were not inferior to his scientific

work (Russkaâ idea, 2015). Andrej Teslâ, a Russian scholar studying conservatism, has in turn argued that the current interest in Il′in, Berdyayev and Solovjov is 'an attempt to revive a conservative revolution of the 1920–1930s' (cited in Surnačeva, 2014). Teslya identifies two different sides of Il′in. On the one hand, Il′in is a prominent philosopher and an author of 'amazing work on Hegel', while at the same time he is an ideologist-publicist who deliberatively reduced the level of discussion in his essays intended for the white emigrants from Russia. According to Teslya, Il′in wanted his texts to serve as 'some kind of conscious primitivization in order to hammer thoughts into the head with a hammer' (cited in Surnačeva, 2014). Another Russian scholar, philosopher Igor Evlampiev, comes to a similar conclusion. In the introduction to his anthology of Il′in's works, he argues that Il′in's ethically and politically maximalist views are especially evident in the final articles of *Our Mission*. This inner mood of Il′in's late journalism, explains Evlampiev, demonstrates not only deep continuity in the development of his views but also an ever-increasing inadequacy of his worldview to the context of post-war-era Europe (Evlampiev, 2004, pp. 60–61).

The irony is that it is this conspiratologist, maximalist pamphleteer, Il′in, who has been brought back to Russian politics. The texts to which Evlampiev and Teslya refer in the above were written between 1948 and 1954 for the members of the closed émigré society 'Russian All-Military Union', which aimed at overthrowing Soviet power. The texts were intended as 'ideological instructions' and were distributed weekly, first in the form of letters and later as a free bulletin (Platonov, 2011, p. 9). These texts were collected into a volume titled *Our Mission* and published posthumously in 1956 in Paris (Il′in, 1956). This collection first appeared in Russia in 1993 (Il′in, 1993) as the second volume of what became a 30-volume collection of Il′in's works. However, selected essays from this volume had already appeared in 1991, when Studio Trite (ТРИТЭ), owned by Nikita Mihalkov published a million-copy edition of Il′in's texts titled *About Russia* (Il′in, 1991; Mihalkov 2007, p. 5).

To explore Il′in's influence on contemporary Russian politics in more detail, this chapter analyses the enemy images Il′in articulated in several texts that have later become a focal point of Il′in's return to Russia. The main texts for analysis include an essay Il′in wrote in 1949 'About Those Who Want Russia's Dismemberment' (Il′in, 2007a, pp. 47–51) and essays written between June and July 1950 entitled 'What Dismemberment of Russia Entails for the World' I–V (Il′in, 2007b, pp. 78–93). These texts appear in several collections of Il′in's works and the latter essay has been singled out as the one that Putin is actually familiar with (Il′in, 1991, 1993, 2007a, 2011; Pravoslavie.Ru, 2009). Reading Il′in's works may not bring us closer to understanding Putin's core beliefs, yet there is a clear family resemblance between the set of ideas circulating around the Kremlin and those written by this conservative thinker for another era (Belousova, 2015; Kommersant, 2006b). He is one of the thinkers whose ideas fit the ethos of Russian politics in the mid-2010s and after. Thereby, Il′in's appearance in the president's speeches is not by chance.

The rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section I will briefly present the theoretical background for the analysis of enemy images. This is followed by the analysis of Il′in's texts. Then, the scripts (of enemy images) explicated in the above-mentioned texts will be compared with the Kremlin's strategic communication of threats. Strategic communication is here defined as purposeful communication advancing an organization's mission (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 4). The analysis aims to identify potential resemblance, contradiction or complementarity of Il′in's typology of Russia's enemies and those imaginaries of enmity and danger explicated in the Kremlin's security discourse. After this, I will return to the discussion on Il′in's importance and the different interpretations offered in previous research. In conclusion, I will argue that the analysis of Il′in's enemy images and their juxtaposition with the Kremlin's strategic communication of threats opens up three different but complementary interpretations of threats and risks for Russia's state security.

Typology of Enemy Images and Legitimation for War

In social-psychological studies, an enemy image refers to 'the commonly-held, stereotyped, dehumanized image of the out-group' (Wahlstrom, 1988, p. 48; Zur, 1991, p. 350). This 'representation of the enemy' can be accurate or biased, imaginary or real (Zur, 1991, p. 350). Yet, in all cases, enemy denotes something more than acknowledgement of the existence of Other as an opposite to Self. Enemies are not only excluded from 'us' but they are represented as less human, even non-human, and dangerous for the 'self' (Harle, 2000, p. 11). In the analysis presented in this chapter, an enemy image is considered a 'script', a narrative resource that both transforms and maintains a master narrative about enmity towards Others and integrity of the cultural-political community. A script, like a frame or schemata, provides 'mental ways of understanding new and old situations', explains Hyvärinen (2007, p. 455). In other words, a script is a practical embodiment of a master narrative and can be used as a 'resource of both in living and telling' (Hyvärinen, 2007, p. 456).

When nations go to war, a script of an evil or aggressive enemy is used in justifying that decision for domestic and foreign audiences. However, Russian sociologist Lev Gudkov reminds us that, although propaganda and disinformation are used in activating enemy images in the public sphere, these mechanisms are effective only insofar as the images used are compatible with the already-existing stereotypes, myths and legends of the mass consciousness (Gudkov, 2005, p. 11). In other words, an enemy image is rarely really 'new' but rather it activates and recycles culturally specific myths, stereotypes and emotions. For example, as Parppei (see Chapter 2, this volume) argues the medieval imagery of Orthodox Christian Russians fighting against infidel enemies has been a persistent feature of the Russian national narrative.

Acknowledgement that enemy images are both idiosyncratic and universal has inspired researchers to create typologies of the enemies. In Ofer Zur's (1991) typology, enemies are defined in relation to the role they play in different types of warfare. The enemy types Zur identifies are: the symbolic enemy of

primitive-ritualistic warfare, the withholding enemy of greedy-colonial warfare, the worthy enemy – a fighter of heroic wars, the enemy of God in a holy war, the threatening enemy in defensive wars, the oppressive enemy in liberation or revolutionary war and, lastly, the invisible enemy within in terrorist or guerrilla warfare. In Zur's typology, the enemy image is used as a rhetorical tool in legitimating the fighting of a war. For example, a symbolic enemy in ritualistic warfare represents the existence of aggressive, chaotic and destructive feelings that, when allowed to be expressed in the course of ritual, 'contribute to the maintenance of harmony and order' (Zur, 1991, pp. 347–349).

Vilho Harle (2000, p. 12) has further developed this scheme by identifying two major categories of enemies: worthy and evil. The worthy enemy is, in Harle's words 'an equal partner in an important, life-affirming ritual or a fighter of heroic wars' (Harle, 2000, p. 12). Whereas an evil enemy is 'understood to be fundamentally different from us' and the fighting of a war is seen as an existential threat to the Self. Thus, the fight against an evil enemy is both justified and 'the uppermost duty in a fundamentally religious sense' (Harle, 2000, p. 12). Lev Gudkov (2005), has identified two major types of enemies. The 'distant enemies' are symbolic enemies, unchanging in the sense that they provide a horizon of meaning for the existence of community. Using the typology offered by Harle, these enemies may take the form of the worthy or evil enemy. The other group of enemies in Gudkov's scheme is called the 'near enemy', which refers to a secret enemy who hides behind different ideological or other masks. This category was used in reference to the internal enemies of the Soviet system. The idea of always present but withholding enemy (Zur, 1991, p. 349) fits this description.

In the above I have discussed enemy images in the context of nations going to war. The spectre of war is perhaps the most usual and extreme case for the creation of enemy images, but they play a role in the other types of crisis periods as well. The recent history of Russia is a good example of this phenomenon. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it a systemically construed image of the West as an enemy, created a vacuum that was reflected in public opinion surveys. Gudkov (2005, p. 10) refers to the survey

conducted by VTsIOM in 1989 where the public was asked: 'What do you think, does our country today have enemies?' The majority of respondents (47%) chose the answer 'why look for enemies if all the problems derive from within?' Only 13% of the respondents were able to name Russia's enemies, ranging from the mafia and communists to NATO and the United States. Ten years later, in 1999–2002, the same survey gave researchers the opposite result. A high majority (65–70%) of respondents were able to identify Russia's enemies, such as the Chechens, NATO, Islamic fundamentalists and China. The results of another survey cited in the introductory Chapter 1 in this volume confirm this trend. Accordingly, in 1994 7% of respondents agreed with the idea that Russia is encircled by enemies. In 2017 already, almost one quarter of respondents (23%) agreed with this notion (Levada-Center, 2018, p. 193).

This change in threat perceptions has most likely contributed to the conservative turn in Russian politics and created a favourable environment for the rise of *siloviki* into the state power in Russia. The higher the level of hatred and aggressiveness is in the society, argues Gudkov (2005, pp. 10–11), the higher the level of trust towards the president, armed forces and the security services (see also Svynarenko, Chapter 8, and Mitikka and Zavadskaya, Chapter 6, this volume). This phenomenon is typical for archaic societies where the armed forces and police remain core institutions, instead of free markets or the parliament typical of modern societies (Gudkov, 2005, p. 12). Against this background, Il′in with his black-and-white imagery of Russia's enemies was a rhetorical resource that could be used in filling the vacuum of ideas that had emerged in Russian society in the early 1990s.

Russia's Enemies Then and Now

Il′in's typology of Russia's enemies

> Politics is the art of recognizing and neutralizing the enemy.
> Of course, politics does not only come down to this.
> But who is incapable of this, he will do better if
> he does not interfere in politics. (Il′in, 2004, p. 504)

As already noted above, Il′in's essay 'About Those Who Want Russia's Dismemberment' was first published posthumously in 1956 in the edited volume entitled *Our Mission*. The essay is dated 8 September 1949 and, as mentioned above, appeared in a bulletin circulated among the members of the 'Russian All-Military Union'. In this text, Il′in identifies five different forms of enmity towards Russia. First, there are antagonists, who, owing to their own weakness, anxiety and fears, perceive Russia's territorial and national unity as a threat. For antagonists, Russia is too big, its language and culture too different. The very otherness of Russia makes its small neighbours perceive it as a threat (Il′in, 2007a, p. 47). In another essay, written a year earlier in September 1948, Il′in argues that other nations are ignorant and afraid of Russia. They do not understand Russia and enjoy seeing her getting weaker (Il′in, 2004, pp. 500–501). Il′in identifies two countries that see Russia the way he would like others to see it: Serbia, a small country that is instinctively drawn towards Russia, and the United States, for which a 'unified national Russia is like a non-dangerous antipode and a major, loyal and solvent buyer' (Il′in, 2004, p. 501). For other countries, Russia is a 'desolate, incomprehensible and unpopular' place.

Here, Il′in draws on the work of the Russian philosophers and writers Pushkin, Dostoyevsky and Danilevsky, who before him argued that, for Europe, Russia is the Other, unpopular, strange and non-European. The main reasons for this otherness, according to Il′in, is that Europeans do not understand the Russian language and have a different religion and, finally, different expectations towards other people. Russian people assume that others are driven by a 'good heart' and kindness, whereas Europeans are driven by rational calculations (Il′in, 2004, p. 501). Relying on stereotypes and dichotomies in argumentation is very typical of Il′in, especially in these journalistic pieces.

But coming back to Il′in's typology of Russia's enemies, the second type has 'unkind' competitors who do not wish Russia to succeed in establishing competitive maritime routes and trade relations or in her rapprochement with the eastern countries. Third, Russia has enemies who are envious of her 'large spaces

and natural riches' and have a 'lust for power'. They see Russia as a 'lower, semi-barbarian race' that they have a right (given by God) to conquer and, consequently, to make Russia 'disappear from the face of the Earth' (Il′in, 2007a, p. 47). Finally, Il′in identifies long-standing religious enemies, 'who do not find peace because Russian people persist in their "schism" or "heresy", do not accept the "truth" and "humility" and are not amenable to ecclesiastical absorption' (Il′in, 2007a, p. 48). Although Il′in excludes the possibility of a crusade against Russia, he claims that religious enemies seek to plunge Russia 'into the deepest turmoil, decay and disaster', and, consequently, Orthodoxy will end up 'in a trash pit of history'. Finally, there are those who despise Russia's originality and seek to subvert the people's soul and will with foreign ideas. These unidentified forces try to impose their ideas upon Russia with concepts such as 'federation' and the right of self-determination for nations, and, with that, attempt to break Russia's national unity (Il′in, 2007a, pp. 48–49, 2007b, p. 89).

After laying out these categories for thinking about enmity towards Russia, Il′in continues by describing what drives Russia's enemies. Primarily, argues Il′in, they want Russia to be weak – in a constant state of internal chaos (*smuta*), revolution, civil war and disintegration. They want Russia to be 'weak willed', driven into internal political disputes, unable to improve the economy and create its own army and navy. In the 2011 edition of *Our Mission* (Il′in, 2011, p. 84) the two main essays in which Il′in elaborates on his ideas on Russia's enemies appear under the title 'West against Russia'. The title summarizes an idea repeated in several texts. Russia's enemies in the West see the country as an empty, semi-barbaric place that has to be civilized, which in Il′in's view amounts to colonization and division of Russia's unity.

For Il′in, Russia's point of gravity is her cultural-historical and territorial unity. In the 1948 essay titled 'What Dismemberment of Russia Entails for the World', Il′in depicts the Russian state as a living organism – a geographically, spiritually, linguistically and culturally united entity. Historically formed, the multicultural Russian nation includes tribes ('smaller brothers') that together

with ethnic Russians form a strategic 'European-Asian stronghold'. Disintegration of this unity would be an unprecedented political adventure with disastrous consequences for the whole world, Il′in argues in the essay (Il′in, 2007b, pp. 78–93). He does not stop to ask whether there are grounds for his analysis of enmity towards Russia, but suggests that it is driven by fear of a united Russia, its peculiar customs and hostility towards the Russian monarchy and Eastern Orthodox Christianity (Il′in, 2007b, p. 80).

The division of Russia into several smaller states, writes Il′in, would offer a solution to Europe's security dilemma. Russia would cease to be a perennial threat to her insecure European and Asian neighbours. To drive this point through, Il′in paraphrases an unidentified European diplomat who, in the 1930s, suggested that, immediately after the collapse of the Bolshevik state, the 'former Russia' would disintegrate along the lines of ethnic groups (Il′in, 2007a, p. 49). Later, these new 'artificial states', most importantly Ukraine, would fall into the hands of European countries, primarily Germany, Il′in writes (Il′in, 2007a, pp. 49–51). The key point here is that, for Il′in, 'tribes', such as the Flemish, the Croats, the Estonians and, in particular, the Ukrainians, are 'unfit to become states' and should remain under the tutelage of bigger neighbours (Il′in, 2007a, p. 54). Much later, Putin referred to Russia and Ukraine as a 'one nation' (AP, 2019). By framing Ukraine as a derivate of Russia, Putin undermines the country's sovereignty and, with it, Ukraine's right to independent foreign and domestic politics. Mihail Eltchaninoff has suggested that, if indeed Putin has reflected on Il′in's words, then he 'can't have entered into his Ukrainian adventure blindly and unprepared' (Eltchaninoff, 2017, p. 55).

Having established the reasoning as to why the West is trying to disintegrate Russia, Il′in turns to the measures used for attaining this goal. His explanation should be cited in full since it captures a common theme repeated on many occasions through Russia's history. According to Il′in, Russia's enemies have tried to weaken the country by way of:

> involving her at a disadvantageous moment in wars that were devastating for her; preventing it from free seas; if possible, then by dividing it into small states; if possible, a reduction in its population (through the maintenance of Bolshevism with its terror — the policy of the Germans 1917–1939); if possible – by planting revolutions and civil wars in it (modeled on China); and then – the introduction into Russia of a 'world backstage' that is stubbornly knitting the Russian people with overwhelming Western-European forms of the republic, democracy and federalism, its political and diplomatic isolation, relentlessly exposing her imaginary 'imperialism', her imaginary 'reactionism', her 'unculturedness' and 'aggressiveness'. (Il′in, 2004, p. 501)

Hannah Thoburn and Anton Barbashin draw attention to the term 'world backstage' (also in Il′in 2007b, p. 87), with which Il′in refers to Western conspiracy against Russia. According to Barbashin and Thoburn (2015, p. 4), 'this term implies that the officially elected leaders of the West are, in fact, puppets of the world's true rulers: businessmen, Masonic agents, and often Jews'.

In post-Soviet Russia, similar conspiracy theories have served to create an image of a country that is surrounded by enemies (Yablokov, 2018). An initial understanding of Russia's problems as a symptom of systemic crisis has been replaced with an image of external enemies that want to harm Russia. For example, after the official version of the *Kursk* accident was published in 2002, 17% of respondents (18 million people) believed that the catastrophe was caused by 'hostile diversion' (Gudkov, 2005, p. 11).

Il′in's texts quoted above were written in the aftermath of the Second World War, and they echo many of the themes that were later picked up by the Soviet propaganda apparatus. As argued by Russian scholar A.V. Fateev (1999, pp. 48–49) in anticipation of a coming conflict, Stalin assigned the Soviet propagandists the task of projecting a negative image of Western countries, the United States in particular. In this context, Soviet patriotism was equivalent to the moral-political unity of Soviet society. Whereas negative phenomena in society were explained as due to a hostile Western influence, they were on many occasions personified as traitors and saboteurs, the hidden enemy within (Fateev, 1999, p. 67). Similar

themes have re-emerged in current Russian official parlance and therefore, in the next section, I will analyse the content of the strategic communication of threats in Putin's major speeches.

Enemy images in Putin's speeches

> Russia has long ceased to be just a reduced map of the Soviet Union; it is a confident power with a great future and a great people. (President of Russia, 2000a)

Drawing from Il′in's typology and the research literature discussed in the previous section, the following three scripts will be used in analysing Putin's major speeches between 2000 and 2019. First, the script of evil enemies, according to which adversaries seek to contain, colonize and finally destroy Russia's sovereignty and cultural-religious independence. Second, the script of worthy enemies that identifies competitors who, like Russia, are engaged in a continuous struggle for economic, natural and human resources and power. Finally, the script of invisible enemies that is an amorphous tale about groups, individuals and (alien) ideas that will undermine Russia's cultural-political unity and weaken its resolve.

The corpus of primary material includes the president's annual speeches to the Federal Assembly that have the status of a 'strategic planning document' (Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossijskoj Federacii; Pynnöniemi, 2018). This special status is sometimes explicitly mentioned, for example, in a 2005 speech in which Putin asks the listeners 'to consider last year's and this year's Address to the Federal Assembly as a unified program of action, as our joint program for the next decade' (President of Russia, 2005). Although the speeches have many 'programmatic' features, it is not always clear what their role is in policymaking. In this section, I will analyse these speeches as instances of the Kremlin's strategic communication on major foreign and domestic political themes or policies. For the sake of research economy, other speeches, interviews and statements will be included only insofar as they clarify an issue or theme that has emerged during the analysis.

Table 1: Number of words mentioned in the president's annual address (2000–2019).

Year	Enemy	Evil	Threat	Fear
2000	x	x	6	x
2001	x	x	3	3
2002	x	1	3	2
2003	x	2	20	1
2004	1	x	3	1
2005	x	x	2	x
2006	x	x	11	x
2007	x	x	3	x
2012	1	x	4	1
2013	x	1	x	x
2014	1	x	3	x
2015	x	1	4	1
2016	x	x	2	1
2018	2	x	10	x
2019	x	x	10	1

Table by the author.

The content analysis of the texts proceeded in two stages. First, I counted how many times the terms fear, evil, enemy and threat were mentioned in the text. The results (Table 1) indicate that these terms are used consistently but rather rarely in the Kremlin's strategic communication. The most frequently used term is threat, which allows for maximum variation in its usage, unlike other terms in the sample that have profoundly negative connotations.

The Kremlin's strategic communication uses metanarratives that present Russia as a cooperative partner, defender of international law and the voice of reason that promotes peace in the world (Pynnöniemi, 2016, pp. 71–91). To make this image convincing requires that all the expressions that would betray Russia's active involvement in armed conflicts be excluded from public discourse. A choreography of statements preceding the Syrian conflict

stands as a rare exception to this general rule. However, it would be wrong to dismiss the Kremlin's statements as mere propaganda, and equally problematic to see them as an 'indication of Putin's policy direction' (Drozdova and Robinson, 2019). A connection to policy can only be established with the careful analysis of Russia's actions, but this is not my purpose in this chapter. Instead, I analyse what was done with these terms in the texts. The three scripts functioned as a rough yardstick to explore the logic of enemy images in the Kremlin's strategic communication of threats. Logic in this context means the place of an enemy or a threat in the story of Russia.

Let us start with a script that seems to have little in common with Il′in's typology of Russia's enemies. This script is the most consistently used, perhaps because it does not identify a specific enemy. Instead, it is about the systemic crisis that puts Russia's survival as a nation and the country at stake. I call this a *system survival script*, where the will of the nation (later also political will) is the point of gravity upon which state sovereignty and thus the nation's survival depend. The set of systemic factors leading to Russia's demise include the 'demographic situation' (President of Russia, 2000a), 'demographic and moral crisis' (President of Russia, 2012) and the 'economic downturn, unstable finances and paralysis of the social sphere' of the 1990s (President of Russia, 2005). The rhetoric of survival creates a sense of urgency in prioritized counteractions and policies. In an open letter to voters before the presidential elections in 2000, Putin explained:

> Our first and most important problem is a weakening of the will, a loss of will and perseverance in following through with our plans – vacillations, going from one extreme to the other and the habit of putting off solving the most difficult tasks. (President of Russia, 2000b)

Five years later, in the famous 'sovereign democracy' speech, the problem of weak will transformed into an 'epidemic of disintegration' (President of Russia, 2005) that had infected Russia. In

this speech, Putin referred to the collapse of the Soviet Union as 'a major geopolitical disaster of the century' that for Russia 'as a nation became a genuine drama'. Here we have the first appearance of an idea that there was someone to blame for Russia's troubles: oligarchic groups, corporate interests, terrorist groups, careless civil servants. These groups, instead of an inherently dysfunctional political-economic system, are the reason that the epidemic spread to Russia. However, in the very same speech, Putin explained what had saved Russia from disintegration. This is the will of the people 'for a new and free life' and the 'energy of self-preservation' (President of Russia, 2005). In a 2012 speech, Putin returned to this theme and explained that, 'if the nation is unable to preserve and reproduce itself, if it loses vital references and ideals, it does not need an external enemy because it will fall apart on its own' (President of Russia, 2012). This requires sacrifices, as Putin vividly explained in 2003:

> I would like to recall that throughout our history Russia and its people have accomplished and continue to accomplish a truly historical feat, a great work performed in the name of our country's integrity and in the name of bringing it peace and a stable life. Maintaining a state spread over such a vast territory and preserving a unique community of peoples while keeping up a strong presence on the international stage is not just an immense labor, it is also a task that has cost our people untold victims and sacrifice. (President of Russia, 2003)

I would suggest that the main reference point of the system survival script is political warfare. Its main target is the 'political will' or the 'nation's will' that in the Russian context is twofold: first, people's capacity to endure immense sacrifices, and, second, the preservation of the authoritarian political model. The annual speeches make it clear that anything that could present a danger to the 'political will' is counted as a threat to the survival of the nation. Although painted in apocalyptic terms, no reference is made to the military security of the country in this connection. So far, the 2018 speech has the most rigid interpretation of 'political will'. In that speech, Putin emphasized that:

> It is high time we take a number of tough decisions that are long overdue. We need to get rid of anything that stands in the way of our development and prevents people from fully unleashing their potential. It is our obligation to focus all resources and summon all our strength and willpower in this daring effort that must yield results. (President of Russia, 2018)

The script of *invisible enemies* is used as a shorthand to explain the different grey zone activities used in the political warfare against Russia. The image of enemy in this case is amorphous and is expressed indirectly, for example in references to 'attempts to pressure us from abroad', 'spreading of myths about Russian aggression' or 'inherent risks of digital technology' (President of Russia, 2008, 2016, 2014a). In the aftermath of mass demonstrations in Moscow and other Russian cities, Putin used the Soviet paradigm of foreign interference to warn people in opposition that:

> any direct or indirect foreign interference in our internal political processes is unacceptable. No one who receives money from abroad for his or her political activities, thus serving certain foreign national interests, cannot be a politician in the Russian Federation. (President of Russia, 2012)

The latest version of the script resembles the threat of subversion articulated in Il′in's 1948 article. Before his re-election to a fourth term in office, Putin addressed the nation, saying that the 'destruction of traditional values from above' is not just an anti-democratic phenomenon but is 'carried out on the basis of abstract, speculative ideas, contrary to the will of the majority' (President of Russia, 2018). Interestingly, Il′in's script of long-term religious enemies is present as a subtext of a 2006 speech. Putin argued that 'I know that there are those out there who would like to see Russia become so mired in these problems [terrorist threat, inter-religious conflict] that it will not be able to resolve its own problems and achieve full development' (President of Russia, 2006).

The script of the *worthy enemy* forms a general narrative frame in which to describe change and the overall logic of international relations. The Cold War-type ideological battle has become

obsolete, and, instead, the new age is about 'fierce competition for quality of life, national wealth and progress' (President of Russia, 2000a). In 2000, Putin declared that 'integration with Europe is one of the key areas of our foreign policy', yet two years later he observed that Russia was surrounded by 'unkind forces' who were neither hostile nor helpful but want to 'push Russia out of promising world markets' (President of Russia, 2002). In 2012, Putin emphasized that 'competition for resources is becoming more intense' (President of Russia, 2012). Just a year later, the scope and level of competition were lifted to a new level: 'the intensity of military, political, economic and informational competition throughout the world is not decreasing but only getting stronger' (President of Russia, 2013). These interpretations were crystalized in the revisions made to the National Security Strategy (Rossijskaâ gazeta, 2015) that highlight Russia's vision of world politics as a struggle for resources and power, as well as a heightened sense of danger towards Russia (Pynnöniemi, 2018).

Until the Ukraine crisis, the script of the evil enemy was mainly used with reference to international terrorism. In contrast to the three other scripts, the evil enemy denotes a potential for direct military confrontation (local or regional war) and even major war (fought between major powers). In a 2003 speech, Putin identified both the proliferation of nuclear weapons and terrorism as 'evils' that should be fought against (President of Russia, 2003). This was what Russia aspired to do, while 'certain countries' (meaning the United States) used military power to 'increase their zones of strategic influence'. Here, Putin repeated an argument he made in the context of a second war in Chechnya. Referring to the terrorist threat, Putin noted that Russia 'found itself face to face with forces that strive towards a geopolitical reorganization of the world' (President of Russia, 2000a). In 2004, immediately after the terror attack in Beslan, Putin went even further, arguing that terrorism is used as an instrument by those who:

> would like to tear from us a 'juicy piece of pie'. Others help them. They help, reasoning that Russia still remains one of the world's major nuclear powers, and as such still represents a threat to

> them. And so they reason that this threat should be removed. Terrorism, of course, is just an instrument to achieve these aims. (President of Russia, 2004)

In the contexts of both Beslan and the Crimea, Putin made an argument that there is no real choice other than to fight the evil enemy (President of Russia, 2004, 2014a, 2014b). This type of argument is typically used in legitimizing defensive or preventive use of armed force. Il′in also discussed this issue at length in his 1925 published book entitled *On Resistance of Evil by Force*. In this book, Il′in attacked Lev Tolstoi's pacifism and argued that war can be necessary, even an obligation, but it is never 'just' (Il′in, 2018; Robinson, 2003, p. 145). This brief analysis of the Kremlin's strategic communication on threats is not enough to draw any far-reaching conclusions. However, the analytical scheme used in the above seems promising and may contribute to a better understanding of the assumptions and ideational frames of strategic decision-making in contemporary Russia. In the last section of this chapter I will discuss the different interpretations put forward to explain Il′in's role in present-day Russian politics.

Interpretation: What Makes Il′in a Useful Philosopher for the Kremlin?

A conservative longing for a bygone world

In 2009, professor Lisitsa wrote seemingly with irritation to the Moscow University blog that a cross, erected in 2005 to Il′in's grave at its new resting place at the Donskoi cemetery in Moscow, had the wrong date of the philosopher's death. This mistake was later repeated on the actual tombstone, ceremoniously revealed in the presence of the then prime minister, Vladimir Putin, on 29 May 2009 (Lisitsa, 2009). Russian state media reported later that Putin was personally involved in arranging the new memorial stones, even paying the costs from his own expenses (Pravoslavie.Ru, 2009; Vesti, 2009). This storyline is repeated in Vladimir Solovyov's documentary film *President* (Solovyov, 2015; see also

Snyder, 2018), which depicts Putin as the main organizer of Il′in's return. However, in 2006, the Russian newspaper *Kommersant* was already reporting (Kommersant, 2006b, p. 2) that the whole operation – the reburial and return of Il′in's archive to Moscow – was part of the presidential programme 'for reconciliation and consent', which was financed by Viktor Vekselberg, a well-known oligarch. Professor Lisitsa maintains that the initiative for Il′in's reburial came from his family and the Russian émigré community when the agreement with the cemetery in Switzerland was about to expire (Lisitsa, 2009). These small inconsistencies in the story about Il′in's return reveal an ensuing battle of interpretation of his meaning for Russia today.

As noted by the Russian philosopher Evlampiev in his essay on Il′in's thinking, during his years in emigration Il′in became one of the brightest and most radical supporters of the Russian idea. He believed in Russia's historical destiny and the special significance of Russian Orthodoxy as the only true religious worldview, called to bring humanity out of the political, social, cultural and spiritual crisis (Evlampiev, 2004, p. 8). This conviction, together with his maximalist portrayal of the world in terms of a black-and-white dichotomy, let Il′in see only two possible options for Russia's development: autocracy or the chaos of revolution (Evlampiev, 2004, p. 40). Philosopher Evlampiev argues that Il′in was caught between the two worlds, not able to move onwards in the new era but yearning for the bygone world of Russian autocracy as it existed before the First World War. This ambivalence in Il′in – the understanding of the Bolshevik revolution as a tragedy and his obsolete yearning for a lost world, touches a nerve in contemporary Russian thinking, wrote Evlampiev:

> On the one hand, we find in them a striking depth of understanding the causes and possible outcomes of the existence of a totalitarian communist system, on the other hand, the equally striking unrealistic nature of many of the proposed methods for the rebirth of a future free Russia. (Evlampiev, 2004, p. 60)

It seems that, instead of acknowledging the shortcomings of Il′in's ideas and conducting a critical analysis of his work at large, Il′in

is portrayed in the public sphere as a prophet who foresaw Russia's current troubles and provided an explanation, if not a solution.

Ideal visionary for the Kremlin

In a 1995 documentary film Il′in was portrayed as genuine visionary and true patriot of Russia. This interpretation was emphasized with a montage of film footage from early 20th-century Russia and Il′in's original texts. The voice reading Il′in's work belonged to Alexander Dugin, who at the time was an ideologist for the new National Bolshevik Party and involved in the neo-Eurasianist movement (Laruelle, 2008, pp. 108–109; Yandex.ru, 2019). The film was produced by Nikita Mihalkov, a film director, actor and outspoken monarchist. Later, Mihalkov recalls how he patiently worked for years to ensure the revival of Il′in's thoughts and memory in Russia. At the beginning, he was met with 'violent resistance' from the Kremlin. President Yeltsin's campaign team did not approve the distribution of Il′in's works during the presidential elections in 1996. Those who were 'thirsty for the collapse of Russian imperium and disintegration of Russia' found Il′in strange and even frightening, Mihalkov (2007, pp. 5–6) explains. For Mihalkov, Il′in's return to Russian politics meant 'a beginning of the end of civil war in Russia' (Mihalkov, 2007, p. 6). As noted above, the reburial of white emigrants in 2005 was a part of the programme that aimed 'to erase the social and cultural divisions born with the 1917 revolution' (Eltchaninoff, 2017, p. 44; see also *Kommersant*, 2006b, p. 2).

For the Kremlin, Il′in's works provided a resource to portray a model patriot – a true believer in the greatness of Russia. In the opening words to the Il′in conference in late 2014, a Kremlin representative stated that the state strategy on national politics that was approved in 2012 was based on Il′in's idea of the creation of 'Russia's great power based on the unity of all the peoples of Russia' (Belousova, 2015, p. 13). Il′in's vision of Russia as a 'living organism' surrounded by the enemies who want to dissolve Russian lands into small, artificial states and thus create anarchy outside and inside Russia seems to have resonated with the

Russian leadership's view of the situation in 2005 and 2006. This was especially evident in Putin's speech given at the occasion of the first National Unity Day in 2005. In that speech, Putin traced the roots of present-day Russian national unity to the year 1612 and the liberation of Moscow from the Polish-Lithuanian invaders. This marked not just an end to the Time of Troubles but also 'an end to civil strife, disunity and the decline associated with all of this' (President of Russia, 2005). Furthermore, continued Putin,

> It was a victory for the patriotic forces, a victory for the strengthening of the state by uniting, centralizing and uniting the forces. With these heroic events, the spiritual rebirth of the Fatherland began, the formation of a great and sovereign state began. (President of Russia, 2005)

This was obviously not a description of the real historical events in 1612. The story served to underline the importance of national unity for Russia's survival as a state. Inherent in this description is an idea of 'heroic service' to the country that, according to philosopher Evlampiev, is one of the main themes running through Il′in's work. Developing an idea of 'spiritual leadership of people', Il′in argued that 'history is not created by collectives, but by individuals, and turns into a preaching of the idea of a leader who is called upon to lead the people' (Evlampier, 2004, pp. 48–49). As suggested by Eltchaninoff (2017, p. 54), Il′in's vision of the Leader as the sole decision maker and holder of total executive power reflects how Putin envisions himself.

In other words, the way in which Il′in imagined a true leadership in Russia after the Soviet regime's collapse is how Putin envisions his task in Russian history. Snyder offers a more simplistic explanation for a link between Il′in and Putin, maintaining that, 'since it is he [Putin] who brought Il′in's ideas into high politics, his rise to power is part of Il′in's story as well' (Snyder, 2018, p. 14). Snyder largely echoes Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn, who have argued that Putin chose Il′in because 'his works legitimized Putin's authoritarian grasp on power, justified limitations on freedom, and provided an antidote to all Western criteria of

freedoms, rights and goals of the state' (Barbashin and Thoburn, 2015). However, the authors went even further and argued that it does not really matter whether Putin and his team actually believe the ideas they propagate since, 'through Il′in, the Kremlin transmits what it sees as a proper ideology for today: a strong cocktail of uncompromising hatred for the West, denial of the European nature of Russian civilization, favour of dictatorial methods of governing, rabid nationalism and a dash of conspiracy theory' (Barbashin and Thoburn, 2015).

How important is it then to establish link between fascist-leaning ideas and Il′in's meaning for present-day Russia? One may look at this question from the viewpoint given by the professor of modern history H.R. Trevor-Roper (1970, p. 20), who argued in 1968 that 'fascism, by its very nature, being a movement of aggressive nationalism, began in a more disorderly fashion than communism, and preserved that disorderly quality to the end'. Whereas communism was an international doctrine that was adjusted to differing national circumstances, fascism, in his view, was its exact opposite: a series of non-intellectual, even anti-intellectual national reactions artificially united and transformed into an international doctrine (Trevor-Roper, 1970, p. 20). He traces the intellectual or anti-intellectual roots of fascist movements to a liberal breakthrough in the 19th century and the backlash it produced in the form of socialism and communism. Taken together, these phenomena provoked 'some of the intellectual raw material out of which fascism would, long afterwards, be compounded' (Trevor-Roper, 1970, p. 20). Most of these ideas were simply ridiculous, says Trevor-Roper.

> The nineteenth-century prophets of fascism, or those who now seem to be their prophets, were often phantom figures. They were the idiot-fringe of defeated conservatism. Their eyes were turned back to the past. They looked away in disgust from the liberal triumph; they had no understanding of the future, no interest in it; and they took refuge in a world of illusion. But for all that they have their significance. History teaches us that even the most tenuous phantoms can come to life if objective circumstances

> change. The fantasies of one generation can provide the mental furniture, even the life-blood, of another. (Trevor-Roper, 1970, pp. 21–22)

Is this what happened to Il′in as well? His maximalist ramblings were largely unfit for their time, yet they are being used as material to legitimate autocratic rule in today's Russia. Or would it rather be the case that the pamphlets Il′in wrote in the late 1940s were like 'folk songs, forever mutating as they pass between individuals, and between political contexts'? This was the case with Orwell's work, as Lynskey (2019, p. 111) notes insightfully. We may not have a simple either/or situation here but a case where both hypotheses apply.

Conclusion

Ivan Il′in was a philosopher, political pamphleteer and a religious thinker. The wide spectrum of his work provides opportunities to use his ideas for many, often mutually contradictory, purposes. The review of recent literature on Il′in has brought to the fore different interpretations of his importance for contemporary Russia. The topics discussed in this chapter do not cover all the themes in Il′in's work and therefore do not provide sufficient grounds for far-reaching conclusions.

The analysis of Il′in's enemy images and their juxtaposition with the Kremlin's strategic communication of threats provides a new opening that deepens our understanding of the link between this conservative philosopher and the conservative turn in present-day Russia. This connection is not straightforward (as argued by Snyder, 2018) but emerges in the way in which Russia's role in the world and threats towards it are conceptualized. The four enemy scripts identified in the texts open up three different but complementary interpretations of threats and risks to Russia's state security.

The script of system survival tells a story of a country in the midst of a systemic crisis. Towards the end of the 2000s, the plot of survival became a tale of the heroic re-emergence of the 'will

of the nation'. With this change, the initial idea that Russia has no external enemies but the country's survival depends on its own capacity for change was replaced with an assumption that Russia is subject to political warfare. The political warfare targets Russia's centre of gravity – its political stability and national unity. The means include all kinds of invisible enemies, from the injection of foreign ideas to the direct financing of the Kremlin's adversaries.

The script of worthy enemies is used in describing the current international order that is viewed as a continuous struggle for resources and power. Finally, the script of the evil enemy is used sparingly but it outlines the parameters of direct military conflict (in contrast to political warfare that uses non-military means). In the Kremlin's strategic communication, terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons are the explicit evil enemies. In the context of the 2004 Beslan tragedy and, after 2014, the conflict in Ukraine, the evil enemy script becomes blurred with the tale of system survival. The (first) use of armed force in the conflict is legitimized by way of activating a familiar narrative: 'there are forces who want Russia's dismemberment'.

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PART II

Perceptions of Patriotism

Introduction to Part II

The second part of this volume turns its attention to factors that shape perceptions of patriotism. Since the beginning of the 2000s, patriotic education programmes, paramilitary training, popular culture and media have acted as channels through which the Russian authorities have sought to create a new national narrative and to generate a positive image of the armed forces among the young people. However, consumerism, individualism and growing dissatisfaction with the Kremlin policies (pension reform, limitations to opposition activities etc.) are factors that call into question the conservative interpretation of state–society relations. The chapters of this part explore this emerging gap between official rhetoric on patriotism and its interpretation by Russian people.

The creation and manipulation of enemy images is an effective means to influence society and its individual members, especially at times of crisis. By manipulating the feelings of enmity and fear, the authorities may consolidate society for the purposes of common action. Along with the negative sentiments, positive feelings of pride and belonging can also be used in consolidation of the society and nation. In the political science literature, the negative sentiments are linked with nationalism and the positive with patriotism (Goode, 2018, p. 259). Surveys conducted in Russia show that the majority of people define patriotism as a love for a country, Russia (see Figure 2). However, being a patriot is not only

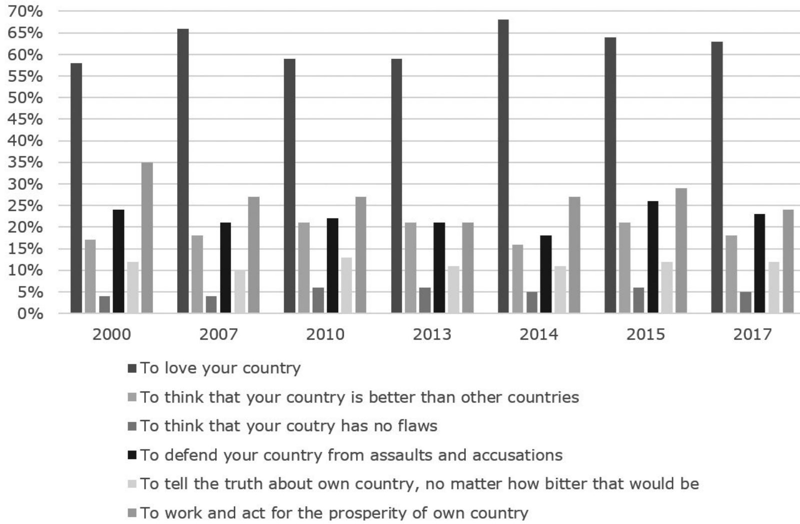

Figure 2: Definitions of patriotism in Russia. Question: What does it mean to you 'to be a patriot'?

Source: Levada-Center (2018, p. 36). Figure by the author.

about belonging to a group but is also defined by what a person is willing to do for the country. Thus, the survey defines patriotism as a willingness to defend one's country and to work towards its improvement. Although the majority clearly sees patriotism as a positive sentiment, the survey brings to surface an inherent dilemma. Patriotism can be seen as a form of exclusion, where the country is rated above others, which in turn may foster xenophobic and nationalistic sentiments.

Since 2014, more and more studies have explored the roots and situational context of Russia's state nationalism, patriotic mobilization and emergent militarization of the society. In her review of previous research on Russian nationalism, Marlene Laruelle (2019, p. 4) argues that this topic has been 'articulated with other vague notions such as patriotism, conservatism, and fascism' but without clear scholarly definition of their explanatory power. Her criticism is targeted at those works that treat Russian nationalism and Russian/Putin's fascism as synonymous terms. Yet, at the same time, she argues, 'a new trend of understanding nationalism in a broader societal and cultural context has emerged. It has sought to interpret the success of Kremlin-backed "patriotism"

as the driver of social consensus in an otherwise deeply divided country' (Laruelle, 2019, p. 5). With this move, a more nuanced understanding of state nationalism and patriotism is emerging.

The research on memory politics in contemporary Russia has been at the forefront of these attempts. Historian Igor Torbakov draws attention to the Kremlin's ability to take internally inconsistent, even outright opposite ideas, and use them for the manipulation of public sentiments. Torbakov argues that:

> By skillfully drawing on various intellectual traditions of Russian nationalism depending on the concrete circumstances and making a kind of postmodernist collage out of all of them, by investing considerable resources in the propaganda of state patriotism, and by having its formidable propaganda machine at full throttle during the peak of the Ukraine crisis, the Kremlin succeeded in styling itself as Russia's leading nationalist force. (Torbakov, 2018, p. 115)

Other researchers have drawn similar conclusions. For example, Julie Fedor, Simon Lewis and Tatiana Zhurzhenko have shown that the Kremlin is involved in 'active and deliberative myth making' that seeks to demonstrate Russia's greatness (Fedor, Lewis and Zhurzhenko, 2017, p. 16; see also Clover, 2016, pp. 13–14). In this context, the political philosophy of Eurasianism is used and abused to legitimize Russia's civilizational mission in the world. This is depicted by Putin (2012) in one of the essays preceding the 2012 presidential elections: 'The Russian people are state-builders, as evidenced by the existence of Russia. Their great mission is to unite, bind together a civilization.' In this:

> state civilization … there are no ethnicities, but belonging is determined by a common culture and values. This civilizational identity is based on the preservation of the Russian cultural dominance, the carriers of which are not only ethnic Russian, but all carriers of such identity regardless of nationality. (Putin, 2012)

Glover interprets Putin's essay as saying that 'as long as you are "culturally" Russian, you are friend' (Clover, 2016, p. 15). Representation of Russia as state-civilization was offered as an

alternative to the monoethnic nation state that would have required clearer demarcation of cultural-political boundaries. As shown by Paul Goode (2018, p. 265) over the course of recent years, 'patriotism increasingly came to mean loyalty to Putin's regime and anti-Westernism'. In the process, 'patriotism has become a form of symbolic capital that is produced, monitored and regulated by the state' (ibid., p. 267).

As shown in the chapters in the second part of this volume, the state's success in monopolizing the production of patriotism is one of the factors inhibiting, rather than facilitating, the consolidation of patriotism. The key variable in this sense is the Russian youth. In the official Russian documents, youth is identified as being in danger owing to harmful foreign influence and, simultaneously, a bearer of Russian traditional values. The task of patriotic education (patriotic clubs, schools, the armed forces) is to contribute to the consolidation of a shared understanding of patriotism and positive image of the armed forces among young people.

In Chapter 5, Jussi Lassila explores factors that inhibit the consolidation of the Kremlin narrative about patriotism, focusing especially on the growing gap between the youth and those representing the conservative turn in Russia. Contributing to this line of research, Chapter 6, by Eemil Mitikka and Margarita Zavadskaya, examines how evidence from social surveys relates to state-promoted patriotism. Lastly, in Chapter 7, Salla Nazarenko analyses the articulation of patriotism in Russian TV media in the 2000s: how do Russian journalists shape their work to fit with the official patriotism and why? This part of the book contributes to the analysis of Russian domestic politics during the war in Ukraine.

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CHAPTER 5

An Unattainable Ideal

Youth and Patriotism in Russia

Jussi Lassila

Abstract

The chapter discusses patriotism's role and future prospects in Russia in relation to its principal target, Russia's youth. Beneath the overall conformism with the Kremlin's patriotic policies, youth's relatively marginal engagement with any fixed patriotic identity is to be found among a variety of patriotic activists who prefer a distinct patriotic position to the state and the rest of society. In generational terms, Russia is witnessing a deepening gap between the policymakers of patriotism and the youth. On the one hand, the state repeatedly attempts to strengthen patriotism as an ideological tool in controlling societal and cultural processes, while, on the other hand, youth's departing views from Soviet-like modes of patriotic education ignite demands to increase the role of patriotism further. Over the course of the next 10–15 years, it

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is very likely that a change in the balance between Soviet-era and post-Soviet cohorts of policymakers and conductors of patriotic policies will have a significant impact on the role and meaning of patriotism in Russian society.

Keywords: Youth, patriotism, militarism, patriotic education, Putin

Introduction: Patriotism as a Substitute for the Lost Ideology

> Russian identity and patriotism, especially among young people over the past 25 years, have visibly eroded, westernized and de-heroized through television and other media, the Internet, film distribution, mass art, all types of advertising and propaganda, which in essence were part of the information-psychological war of the West, aimed at transforming the Russian mentality, its value-normative core. (Semënov, 2017, p. 133)[1]

The topic of patriotism is perhaps the most tangible evidence of Soviet legacies figuring in Russia almost 30 years after the end of the Soviet Union. There are two factors worth mentioning in explaining this legacy. First, after the early stages of the Soviet rule that comprised Lenin's anti-state internationalist ideas, Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country was a pre-stage of *Soviet patriotism* regardless of the ideational controversy between communism (Soviet) and a bourgeois type of belonging to a nation state (patriotism). Retrospectively, this controversy became ultimately buried in Hitler's attack in 1941 when the 'Great Patriotic War' of the Soviet state was formulated under the existential threat. Regarding the magnitude and repercussions of the war, as well as the Soviet victory in it, it is no wonder that it became the cornerstone for the post-Soviet patriotism. In terms of cultural trauma (Giesen, 2004), wars have always been central pillars for nations' identity narratives, and human losses in this war were particularly devastating. While the actual cultivation of the victory began in the mid-1960s (Dubin, 2004), at the crossroads of Soviet geopolitical power and of the looming stagnation of the Soviet system,

the past-looking cult of the war became deeply intertwined with the memory of the Soviet Union's 'golden days' (Gudkov, 2012; Kangaspuro and Lassila, 2012; Wolfe, 2006).

Second, as to other elements of Soviet patriotism – namely ideals of universally good behaviour and citizenship and readiness to defend your homeland – its appeal strengthened considerably among the number of policymakers, teachers and citizens during the chaotic years of the 1990s. In addition to changes in public opinion in the mid-1990s, from pro-Western sympathies to growing demands of national order and a strong state (Dubin, 2001), the political elite became more sensitive towards patriotism. During his presidential campaign in 1996, Boris Yeltsin encouraged society to search for a new national idea. This was a political concession towards issues of national identity in the midst of deepening distrust among the population towards the Kremlin's liberal and economically centred policies. Likewise, a new emphasis on national identity was Yeltsin's tactics of 'patriotic centrism': the political stance that aimed to resonate with the majority mood while downplaying the political capital of the Kremlin's hard-line anti-Western opponents (Laruelle, 2009, p. 23). Unsurprisingly, its central historical reference was the memory of the Great Patriotic War (Malinova, 2015, pp. 91–100).

It was Vladimir Putin's rule that meant the actual consolidation of patriotic centrism in Russian society and politics. The cultivation of Soviet patriotism was 'hijacked' from communists' political rallies and 'nationalized' for the Kremlin's political capital in galvanizing the state's unity around the new president (Kangaspuro and Lassila, 2017; Malinova, 2017). The introduction of the state programmes of patriotic upbringing and the establishment of pro-Kremlin youth movements in 2001 were the first moves in implementing the Putin-era identity policies (Lassila, 2014; Sperling, 2009). The process went on without major disturbances throughout the first decade of the millennium. The first major blow to the Kremlin's alleged consensus of patriotism appeared via anti-governmental protests in the winter and spring of 2011–2012. Whereas the state patriotism had become largely manifested thus far by activities of pro-Kremlin youth movements – supposedly

preventing any youth activities against the state – the large-scale oppositional mobilization in 2011–2012 proved that the societal prevalence of patriotism was a different thing than a political engagement with it. The story of the Naši youth movement as the major patriotic youth policy actor was over and the implementation of state youth policies was restructured (Lassila, 2014, 2016; Schwenk, 2019).

Patriotism as a major pillar of the Kremlin's policies did not disappear, however. Quite the opposite: since 2012, along with Putin's third presidential term and the Kremlin's strengthening authoritarianism, the military aspect of patriotism and patriotic education have become more emphasized. In terms of Russia's domestic developments, the year 2014 became the watershed for the military-patriotic trend within patriotism (see Eemil Mitikka and Margarita Zavadskaya, Chapter 6, this volume). The annexation of Crimea, the war in Ukraine and the conflict with the West have had a significant impact on the goals and contents of patriotic policies. Before the year 2014, the state's programmes of patriotic upbringing since 2001[2] have demonstrated a more or less visible friction with those youth policy goals that have relied on civic education patterns (Blum, 2006; Lassila, 2014; Piattoeva, 2005). Developments since 2014 provided for proponents of the Soviet-style patriotic upbringing a major leitmotif to demand further efforts to militarize the curriculum of patriotic education.

The persistence of patriotism as the state's policy ideal is also a result of Russia's weak legacy of civil society and of resistance against authoritarian initiatives (Lussier, 2016). Resources and societal traditions for establishing individually oriented civic education patterns in the 1990s were minuscule. Along with deepening economic problems, teachers and authorities simply lacked the framework and skills to conduct West-looking civil society ideals. These challenges were already appearing during the perestroika-era educational practices when teachers were embattled with new ideals of communicative equality intended to replace previous authoritative didactics (Gorham, 2000). These challenges deepened in the chaotic circumstances of the post-Soviet 1990s that rapidly fostered old ways of teaching children as future

citizens. As Anna Sanina (2017) points out in her comprehensive study on patriotic education in Russia, 'for the majority of teachers and school directors, the task of civic education was new, so they understood and implemented it through the tools that were accessible to them, and the greatest of those tools was patriotic education' (ibid., p. 144). A quote from Sanina's respondent, a 55-year-old male teacher, captures the weight of the Soviet-era patriotic education patterns vis-à-vis new democratic expectations:

> What could we tell them [the students]? That tomorrow they will have a bright future … a bright future is also something from ideology, right? The ideology was sort of forbidden. So we had to appeal to the emotions and feelings of patriotism, and to show that our great country is great, that we ascend after the Great Patriotic War. (ibid., p. 145)

Whereas the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation explicitly prohibited any state ideology, the process of amending the Russian Constitution, which began with President Putin's address to the Federal Assembly on 15 January 2020, lifted the importance of patriotism to a new, constitutional level.[3] These changes crystallize patriotism's role for the country's political establishment as the most suitable 'ideological substitute' for the widespread negative experiences that the 1990s evoked in the majority of Russians. In addition, as the quote above shows, patriotism had been an intrinsic element for teachers educated during the Soviet years, who had faced the hardships of the 1990s. All these factors facilitated the consolidation of the state patriotism as the flagship of Russia's identity policies under Putin. Its symbolic cradle has been the cultivation of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, not least due to its exclusive role as the most important national event for the population.

Against this backdrop, the chapter examines patriotism's role and prospects in Russia vis-à-vis its central target, Russia's youth. A central point is the coexistence that prevails between the overall conformism with the state's patriotic policies among the population, including the youth, and a relatively marginal engagement to any fixed patriotic identity. In terms of this coexistence, or of

tension, the next two sections contextualize patriotism in light of youth's political participation over the course of the Putin era, drawn from the existing literature on the topic. The discussion shows that those who wish to identify themselves as true patriots prefer a distinct patriotic position to the state and the rest of society. In a similar vein, the nationalist military voluntarism related to the war in Ukraine appears as a part of diverse popular interpretations that the state's vague patriotic policies have generated. Both issues illustrate the absence of consensus on 'correct' and satisfactory ways of conducting patriotism in society. Taking together these developments, the rest of the chapter illustrates that Russia is witnessing a deepening generational gap between policymakers of patriotism and youth. This gap is present, on the one hand, in repeated attempts to strengthen patriotism as an ideological tool in controlling societal and cultural processes. On the other hand, the impression on youth's departing views from Soviet-like modes of upbringing ignite demands to increase the role of patriotism further, in particular among those who are prone to traditional values, typically understood as values that shone in the past. Meanwhile, vague parameters of evaluating patriotism's effectiveness along with opposite trends in youth's social behaviour, as well as ageing implementers of patriotic policies, do not provide promising prospects for patriotic education policies in the future. A potential rupture between generations does not mean that patriotism would disappear from educational and policy ideals. Yet, it is highly probable that an inevitable change in the balance between Soviet-era and post-Soviet cohorts of policymakers and conductors of patriotic policies will have a significant impact for the role and meaning of patriotism in the future.

Patriotism and Political Participation

There are plenty of data that indicate political apathy among Russians, in particular, among Russia's youth. Weak political participation of youth is even mentioned as a challenge in the current state's youth policy (Strategiâ razvitiâ molodeži Rossijskoj Federacii, 2013), yet the Kremlin's exclusive political practices

have repeatedly demonstrated that politically passive citizens are much more preferable than active ones. Over the course of the years, opinion polls have shown that citizens, including young Russians, are politically passive. At the same time, they demonstrate a relatively positive attitude towards political participation, yet in generational terms young Russians have tended to be less interested than older people in political issues (see e.g. FOM, 2008, 2017). However, such data seem to predict youth's actual behaviour poorly, as far as we have seen that youth in particular have been active in protest events in 2017 and 2018. In this respect, it can be asserted that youth's apoliticism is not related to politics as such but to existing political structures and formations (Omel'čenko, 2006). For instance, at a time of the large-scale public presence of pro-Kremlin youth organizations in late 2007, the majority of respondents (66%) pointed out that they did not know anything about the Naši youth movement, which appeared to be the most familiar movement in the poll of the Levada-Center (2008). For 56% of respondents, Naši did not arouse any special feelings either (ibid.). In a similar vein, according to a poll by FOM (2011), approximately 55% of respondents did not know any youth movements, although the most familiar ones were the pro-Kremlin movements Molodaâ Gvardiâ ('Young Guard'), Naši and Molodaâ Rossiâ ('Young Russia').

The case of patriotism demonstrates a similar coexistence between the overall conformism with ideals promoted by the state and the popular lack of interest towards the conductors of these ideals. Citizens tend to separate their lack of approval of the government's actions from general support and pride in their country (Levada-Center, 2014; see also Mitikka and Zavadskaya, Chapter 6, this volume). The state-promoted patriotism in Russia can be seen as a component in institutions of domination – that is, 'instruments of authoritarian imposition, designed to produce compliance and cooperation within monopolies of political power' (Schedler, 2013, p. 54). In this capacity, 'authoritarian regimes need to build solid institutions of domination if they wish to thrive and survive' (ibid.). In line with Andreas Schedler's argument, according to which uncertainty is an endogenous rather

than exogenous risk for all authoritarian regimes, in particular for electoral authoritarian ones, the Kremlin's patriotism represents mixed results. It has effectively fulfilled the vacuum of political ideals in the post-communist ideational absence, strengthening the impression of the Kremlin's ideological domination. However, at the same time, Russians' perceptions on patriotism show that they are far from fixed, not to mention politically active, engagement with the state's ideals of patriotism.

Paul Goode's (2016) detailed ethnographic study on patriotism's perception among Russians in 2014–2015 shows that Russians' perception and understanding of patriotism is a curious mix of individualism and conformity (see also Huérou, 2015). As a central indication of this conclusion, Goode refers to a casual opinion poll made by a Russian website in August 2014, which urged citizens' opinions in response to the question 'what is more important to you, Crimea or cheese?' (Goode, 2016). According to the poll, 67% of respondents chose cheese over Crimea regardless of the patriotic and anti-Western euphoria that prevailed in Russia in the summer 2014 (ibid.). The poll's obvious lack of representativeness notwithstanding, it encapsulates Goode's respondents' views. There is individualism in showing, for instance, material preference of cheese over some abstract ideas, and conformity by constantly viewing patriotism as a positive thing. Russians are generally convinced that the vast majority of their fellow citizens are solidly patriotic, while they believe that the government and society has been effective in producing patriotism. However, when it comes to citizens' personal position, Goode points out, 'Russians embrace an individualist, localized, and apolitical patriotism that takes shape through daily practices related to loving the motherland, daily life, and sacrificing public choice' (ibid., p. 423).

In terms of the regime's political mobilization and means of legitimization, Goode sees that official patriotic narratives have more or less succeeded (ibid., pp. 429–430). Nevertheless, the population's general conformism with patriotism does not make one patriotic. Individuals have their own notions of patriotism, which are closer to an apolitical ideal rather than to public display or civic engagement. It follows that 'official patriotism in Russia

cannot be said to generate regime legitimacy so much as it produces and regulates public displays of regime loyalty, even when such displays appear to others to be ritualized or inauthentic' (ibid., p. 445).

With regard to this individual perception and understanding, patriotism as a concept appears to be autonomous and may serve the purpose of either supporting or criticizing the Kremlin (ibid., p. 421). For instance, in the Levada-Center's (2014) survey in early 2014 (before the annexation of Crimea), the great majority of Russians, 84%, shared the view that 'patriotism is a deep personal feeling; a person decides for him/herself what is patriotic and what is not'. In the 18–24 age group the share was 86%. Only 8% shared the view that 'the state has to define what is patriotic and what is not', and 7% did not know. Furthermore, in terms of political mobilization attached to patriotism, 82% of Russians thought that 'one can criticize the authorities and, at the same time, be a patriot', and only 11% preferred the view that 'one who criticizes the authorities cannot be considered a patriot' (ibid.). Although there was a slight increase towards the state's role in defining the meaning of patriotism in April 2015, a year after the annexation of Crimea, the basic division of views had remained the same. 80% saw patriotism as 'a deep individual feeling', and 13% preferred the state's role in defining patriotism (Levada-Center, 2015).

These data illustrate that the vast majority of Russians reject the idea of the state imposing and defining patriotism from above. However, in 2015, approximately half of Russians (49%) shared the idea that 'a state program of patriotic upbringing is necessary because today, in the front of external and internal threats, the state must bring up patriots ready to defend interests of the country' (Levada-Center, 2015). Such controversy can be explained by the overall consensus on the importance of patriotism that prevails in the Russian society: an individual has a personal patriotic attachment to his/her country and this attachment is something that cannot or should not be imposed by the state. At the same time, there seems to exist a suspicion on fellow citizens' patriotic engagement, and, in terms of fixing the problem, people tend to rely on the Soviet-era didactic practices on patriotic upbringing.

Although answers varied depending on different socio-economic, generational, geographic and education groups, there were at least approximately 30% of Russians[4] who saw patriotism as a deeply individual matter while, at the same time, arguing for the state's patriotic upbringing policies. This kind of 'controversy in consensus' was also a central finding in Goode's study, which resulted in a constant separation that his respondents drew between patriotism (and overall adaptation to it) and 'being a patriot' (Goode, 2016, pp. 444–445). In other words, for Goode's respondents the most common way of thinking was 'I consider myself a patriotic person, I have an individual view on it, I appreciate active patriots, yet I am not such a person'.

Patriotic Activists

In terms of active patriots as a distinct category from 'loyal masses', Marlene Laruelle's study on members and activists of patriotic youth clubs in Russia shows also patriotism's ambivalence as a state-political guideline (Daucé et al., 2015; Laruelle, 2015). The narrative of the activists and young people participating in these clubs was distant from official discourses, promulgated in top politicians' declarations and education programmes; for instance, 'the idea of regaining Russia's great power status through the daily engagement of citizens alongside the state was totally absent' (Laruelle, 2015, p. 23). Again, these clubs may serve the function of political loyalty by emphasizing their local importance, that is, 'small motherland' (*malaâ rodina*). Likewise, such emphases may have an impact on the fact that people tend to be more patriotic in rural areas. However, to interpret this patriotic activism as a widespread political platform for effective society–military relations is an overstatement (see e.g. Robertshaw, 2015). For sure, many patriotic clubs have links to military institutions but these connections are based on their general military-patriotic position and worldview, rather than on any systemic or consensual coordination of military-patriotic upbringing. As Laruelle points out (2015, pp. 23–24),

> Most of the militarized clubs criticize the current state of the Russian military, the lack of seriousness and professional awareness of its officers, and recognise the dangers associated with the hazing (*dedovŝina*) of conscripts. Some military clubs thus form a very clear-cut strategy directing some young men to units with no hazing, while trying to persuade others that it would be better for them to avoid military service.

In this respect, there is a paradoxical situation in which the municipalities finance patriotic clubs to prepare young men for conscription, while in practice these clubs may assist in avoiding military service (ibid., p. 23). Moreover, among those clubs, which deal with military history and searching for soldiers' remains, the military is often seen as a 'place full of people lacking passion, who want to live at the state's expense and are in fact mere bureaucrats' (ibid.; see also Dahlin, 2017). Indeed, many members of these clubs have not done their military service (Laruelle, 2015, p. 24).

Following Laruelle (ibid.), patriotism appears to be a loose platform of 'being a citizen', a form of social activity or hobby via which social legitimacy can be attained. While being built on officially valorized and valued goals – first and foremost, on the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War – patriotic clubs can be seen as useful in terms of fostering the social engagement of Russian citizens and of cultivating their rejection of politics. In other words, patriotic clubs figure as instances of loyalty by producing and maintaining 'an almost content-free and depoliticised patriotism' as the regime's involuntary and concealed allies while claiming their independence from state prerogatives (Daucé et al., 2015; Laruelle, 2015, p. 25). However, the role of the clubs becomes more problematic in terms of the clubs' independence from the state's control:

> The majority of clubs existed prior to the Kremlin's renewed interest in the patriotic theme. They are animated by dynamics 'from below', not encouraged from 'above'—even if both tendencies merge, in particular around issues of finance. The clubs are closer to a form of social assistance than to ideological

> surveillance: their concerns are drug and alcohol use, family issues and youth anti-social behavior. … The clubs promote patriotic values that go in the direction desired by the state (order, hierarchy, morality). (Laruelle, 2015, p. 25)

Similar to these clubs, Johanna Dahlin (2017) shows in her study on the Russian Search Movement[5] that activists often criticize the state as having lost its legitimacy in carrying patriotic values. Instead, genuine patriotic values are regarded as being in the hands of the people or at least in those of some 'enlightened' individuals (ibid.; Laruelle, 2015, p. 26).

These views are in tune with activists of the Naši youth movement who eagerly distinguish themselves from the 'common youth', who they see as politically passive, as well as from other youth political actors and representatives of the state's patriotic policies (Lassila, 2014, pp. 83–92, 154–159). At the same time, while building appealing patriotism for the youth with ambitious aims, Naši lapsed into repetitious and stereotypic representations of patriotism of the Soviet era (ibid.). Hence, the demand for cultivating patriotism is certainly present in society and mutually shared by citizens and patriotic activists. However, a consensus on how to cultivate patriotism 'correctly' is missing. For citizens this appears as the simultaneous conformism with patriotism's overall relevance in society and personal separation from any political and civic activities including patriotism. For patriotic activists, the overall demand of patriotism clashes with the lack of resources or ineffective bureaucracy, or through authorities' measures that suppress voluntary patriotism into a strictly limited framework.

As an example of the latter, according to a law initiated at the end of 2017, all weapons had to be licensed in Rosgvardiâ[6] from the beginning of the year 2018. The licence requires that weapons must be purchased via official weapon stores, which means that hardly any historical weapon (muskets and the like) could meet the criteria. The consequence was that these guns, commonly used by military history enthusiasts, might become illegal (Dožd′, 2017). A representative of a club saw the decision simply as the result of authorities' fear of any armed people who are aware of

military tactics (ibid.). His view is not completely conspiratorial. For instance, Elisabeth Sieca-Kozlowski (2010) points out in her study on military-patriotic education that the state's aim, besides encouraging youth into military service, is also to gather war veterans[7] into the state's control by preventing their potential spontaneous activities. Recently, along with strengthening control over the internet, practitioners of military history have fallen under repressive measures (Meduza, 2018).

Laruelle (2015 p. 26) asserts that this kind of misunderstanding between the state-backed patriotism and patriotism's actual practices has been useful for the Kremlin (see also Huérou, 2015). This can be explained by the fact that patriotic activities that are in line with the official patriotic goals (the cultivation of the Great Patriotic War's memory in particular) figure as a part of the de-politicized loyalty to the regime. As long as nascent political alternatives to Putin's authoritarian regime are missing, this is certainly true. Yet, my own experience from a military museum in the Leningrad oblast does not completely support this view. This tiny museum is located in the site of bloody battles around the besieged Leningrad, and is dedicated to these events. While practising common patriotic activities by aiming to identify Red Army soldiers who fought there, as well as searching for the remains of soldiers, the director of the museum demonstrated an extremely critical stance towards official views and interpretations of the war. He identified himself as an ultimately patriotic citizen who was proud of demonstrating his independence from the state, while not hiding his deeply anti-American views. The museum's exhibitions did not display any notable difference from the state-run military-patriotic museums in St Petersburg and Moscow except having poorer terms of reference. Yet, the director explained his dedication to the museum by the obligation of seeking the truth of the events and the madness of the war. For instance, by conducting a careful study of the Red Army soldiers executed by NKVD (the Soviet interior ministry) with the Memorial organization, the NGO familiar with its work with the Stalin-era repressions and difficulties with the current regime. This neglected and almost taboo theme in the persistent narrative of the Great Patriotic War

was often expressed with his sarcastic notions on Russia as the victory state (*strana pobeditel'*), while asking by the same token: where can you see the victory today?[8]

From Civic Patriotism to Military Nationalism

Actual practices and survey data related to patriotism show that patriotism's capacity to function as a common national idea securing the unity of the multinational state is tilting towards the division between ethnic Russians and those who do not belong to that group (Goode, 2016; on the relationship between nationalisms and the state, see Laine, 2017). For instance, in 2014, according to a poll by the Levada-Center (2014), 34% of Russians agree (fully or partially) with the statement that 'persons of "non-Russian" nationalities are guilty of causing many of the misfortunes of Russia'. However, when this topic related to migration was asked in less provocative manner, 73% of Russians agreed with the statement 'the government should try to restrict the influx of migrants'. Only 19% agreed with the view that 'the government should not have any administrative barriers against migration, but instead try to use it for the benefit of the country' (ibid.).

The year 2014 demonstrated that a common national idea under the official framework of state patriotism and the Soviet legacy of militarism could become materialized in the name of unrestrained nationalism and military adventurism rather than in terms of defending the multi-ethnic Russian Federation according to official patriotic ideals. The unfolding war in eastern Ukraine in summer 2014 lifted the myth of Novorossiâ – the historical territory containing south-eastern Ukraine – from almost complete ignorance to the epicentre of Russia's political mainstream. At the same time, it showed that the ideological hollowness of the official patriotism had not tamed political circles, more apt to illiberal views than Western–democratic emphases. Nationalist imaginaries of Anti-Majdan and Novorossiâ mobilized armed voluntary groups whose ideas relied either on the restoration of the Soviet Union, of building a fascist Russian state, or of an Orthodox Russian empire (Laruelle, 2016). Whereas many of

these war adventurers belonged to various oppositional and anti-Kremlin nationalist groups (see e.g. Horvath, 2015; Lassila, 2019), the Kremlin's capacity to divide and instrumentalize them along with the regime's policies can be seen as a success. The variety of interpretations that the nationalist myth of Novorossiâ generated among these groups intensified their ideational cleavages rather than transforming their effort into any large-scale nationalist consolidation in the name of the 'Russian Spring'.[9]

Robert Horvath (2015) points out that the annexation of Crimea appeared to be more dividing than consolidating element among Russian nationalists. He sees three factors behind this division. First, the Kremlin-aligned nationalists interpreted the Maidan revolution in Ukraine as a threat to Russia, while oppositional nationalists saw the regime collapse in Ukraine as a civic model in acting against authoritarianism. Second, the general fault line between ethnic nationalist and imperialists had deepened, since the first envisioned Novorossiâ as an ethnically purely Russian enclave, while the latter dreamed of a multi-ethnic Eurasian empire. Finally, the speed of events and the Kremlin's sudden move towards an ambiguous mixture of ethnic and imperial nationalisms managed to 'steal' the nationalists' agenda unto the regime's control (ibid., pp. 820–821; Pain, 2014).

From the viewpoint of seeing patriotism as the regime's means of ideological domination, one could argue that the mobilization of diverse anti-governmental nationalist circles into loyalists of the Kremlin, wittingly or unwittingly, demonstrates that patriotism as a state policy worked. However, this was the Kremlin's ability to instrumentalize, or to conduct 'ideational improvisation' (Hale et al., 2019) in the name of national pride, rather than the success of the state's patriotic guidelines per se. Indeed, official policies on patriotism pursue the Soviet-era ideals of 'good' patriotism that are in contrast to 'bad' nationalism, for instance by linking patriotism to an explicit Soviet-era concept of *internationalism*.[10] In this regard, the outcome of Novorossiâ and of nationalist-militaristic voluntarism served the Kremlin's short-term political interests beyond existing official patriotic policies. The year 2014 underlined the ideological hollowness of patriotism, its

reliance on Soviet-era ideals, and the realities of young people that are increasingly distant from the world of the Soviet days. This gap preserves the lacuna that is filled by actions that counter the official patriotism, either by unexpected nationalist adventurism or by a much more common indifference towards ideals of active patriotic engagement.

Identifying Problems of Patriotic Education

How have then the establishment and policymakers reflected upon obvious problems that prevail between doctrinal patriotism and its perception among the youth? Two emphases can be found in the discussion concerning patriotism's importance in youth's socialization, which can be termed *broad* and *narrow*. Following the broad approach and its essentialist view on patriotism's unambiguous importance and acceptance in society, patriotism is seen as a nexus of all good things that must be fostered further. For example, in one of the numerous textbooks on this matter, patriotism is described as follows:

> (P)reservation of mother tongue; attention and concern for big and small [home] Motherland; respect for historical and cultural heritage of the country; responsibility for the fate of the country; mercy and humanism, that is, true patriotism is the combination of positive features that must be formulated by society including pedagogues among younger generations. (Šul′ženko, 2017, p. 241)

This is a manifestation of the enduring legacy of the Soviet-era 'patriotism of everything' (Sanina, 2017). It is not far-fetched to assert that the post-Soviet absence of a state ideology within the legacy of the Soviet-era didactic patterns facilitates seeing patriotism as a solution for variety of anomalies that patriotically oriented pedagogues sense in today's life of youth. The narrow approach, instead, does not deny the broad framing of patriotism as such but it urges not forgetting the ultimate goal of all patriotism. That is, preparation for military service, and indeed, for a war.

A common feature of both approaches is an echo of moral panic. Multiple problems of Russian society become articulated via

expectations targeted at youth, while existing problems are seen as a result of the lack of patriotism. Whereas this kind of reasoning is present in the Putin-era youth policies in general, it has become more emphasized since 2012 (see Veera Laine, Chapter 3, this volume). From a Western liberal viewpoint, a substantial problem of patriotic education is in its paternalistic approach to youth, which treats them as a monolithic group of citizens, initially passive objects who are under the constant risk of 'wrong' influences, and thus must be directed into 'correct' ones. Again, this is a resilient mood of the Soviet-era youth policies that surfaced during the perestroika-era youth debates (Pilkington, 1994) and have prevailed ever since (Omel′čenko, 2006, 2012). For instance, in an article dedicated to problems of patriotic education, the author sees challenges of 'Western pragmatism' as follows:

> Research in this field demonstrates that today youth's worldview comprises a pragmatic relationship to education targeted at achieving a prestigious profession, seeing education as a tool of receiving material well-being and high social status. This is related to a consumerist and passive attitude towards culture, to a commitment to Western ideals of material well-being, of career development and social success. (Rusinova, 2015, p. 3)

The quote indicates that the tension between traditional educational ideals (that is, Soviet-era patriotic upbringing) and perception of these ideals among the youth is recognized. However, instead of discussing the overall rationality of patriotic education and its function for youth's everyday needs and societal expectations, the main problem is seen in the surrounding society that allegedly generates 'wrong' orientations for youngsters. Furthermore, an important deficit in minimizing problems of patriotic education is in the lack of a coherent state ideology, which appears to be opposite to the democratic principles of the 1993 Constitution:

> When we talk about state policies, about fight against extremism, improvement of patriotism, we must talk about very complex structure. It's not only about youth, it is about the work with adults, with media, including restrictions in the field of information, although someone screams that 'hey, we have freedom'[11]

> … this is our problem, and how I see it, is that we lack a unite and general concept of ideology in the country. We don't have it. (Puzanova and Larina, 2017, p. 34)

With these concerns in mind, Putin's conservative-patriotic additions to the Constitution in 2020 can be seen as the regime's response to long-standing demands of the country's conservative circles. The document *Patriotic Upbringing of Youth in the Russian Federation: State of Affairs, Actual Problems and Directions in Development* (*Patriotičeskoe vospitanie molodeži v Rossijskoj Federacii: sostoânie, aktual'nye problemy i napravleniâ razvitiâ*), published by the Federal Council of the Russian Federation in 2015, is a phenomenal collection of these demands (Sovet Federacii, 2015). The document comprises presentations and a transcript of the discussion related to challenges of patriotic education in Russia's regions. The discussion had 20 participants representing different institutional positions in Russia's regions whose average birth year was 1962.[12] A principal challenge for many of them was related to ways how to increase the efficiency of patriotic education. Furthermore, a common solution for existing problems crystallized in the demand to increase the military dimension instead of a broader, let alone more dialogical, approach to patriotism. One participant argues that 'the holy goal of the military-patriotic upbringing is to guarantee citizens' preparedness for military service and the defense of Fatherland' and contrasts this mission to civic dimensions of patriotic education (ibid., pp. 40–42). In a similar vein, post-Soviet educational reforms are seen deeply detrimental since they have shown, from a participant's viewpoint, 'an opposite direction with school parliament, career, habituation with foreign countries and cultures, tourism and all the rest' instead of the Soviet-era military-patriotic education (ibid., pp. 42–43).

Moreover, solutions for existing problems indicate a full-scale envisioning of the Soviet-era practices and criticism against youth-centred civic education ideals. According to a participant, the latter represents 'flawed ideology of child-centrism (*detocentrizm*) that might lead to the destruction of the upbringing

process of children and of traditional family relationships' and urged that the system of patriotic upbringing needs to be built 'according to the principle of family and fatherland-centrism' (ibid., p. 47).

When viewed from a larger youth policy perspective, the document reveals the resilience of identity flux in Russia since the end of the Soviet Union. The issue is not about the lack of political interest in educational matters, youth and citizenship but about profound uncertainty and frustration on how these educational matters should be taught and how they could work better. Patriotism is simultaneously a nexus and battleground for different interpretations and policy-level interests. It is a battleground between the ministries of education and defence, while it is the nexus for those numerous teachers and policymakers who matured during the Soviet Union and were socialized into the pattern of patriotic education (Sanina, 2017; see Arseniy Svynarenko, Chapter 8, this volume). In this respect, patriotism's essentialist role in the Russian society can be explained by the legacy of the Soviet-era normative ideal of the decent citizen[13] which has been cultivated and realized in various youth policy projects over the course of the Putin era (Lassila, 2011, 2014). Within this normative legacy, patriotism figures as an umbrella for everything that is valued as necessary for a good citizenship (healthy, diligent, polite, civilized, responsible for surroundings, respectful of traditions, loyal to parents, authorities and the state and ready to defend it against enemies). This strong Soviet-era legacy is increasingly compounded with another, equally strong Soviet legacy, namely militarization. The document welcomes the profound 'patriotization' of society as a whole but urges that this process should be done in strictly military terms. Most importantly, the whole discussion on patriotism's meaning and relevance among the youth has paid – as in the Soviet Union – no attention to youth's own views (Omel′čenko 2006, 2012; Pilkington 1994).

Following the discussion of policymakers' concerns in fostering patriotism's role in society, it seems that the major solution for recognized challenges is a stronger reliance on the military dimension of the Soviet-era patriotic ideals. This can be seen by

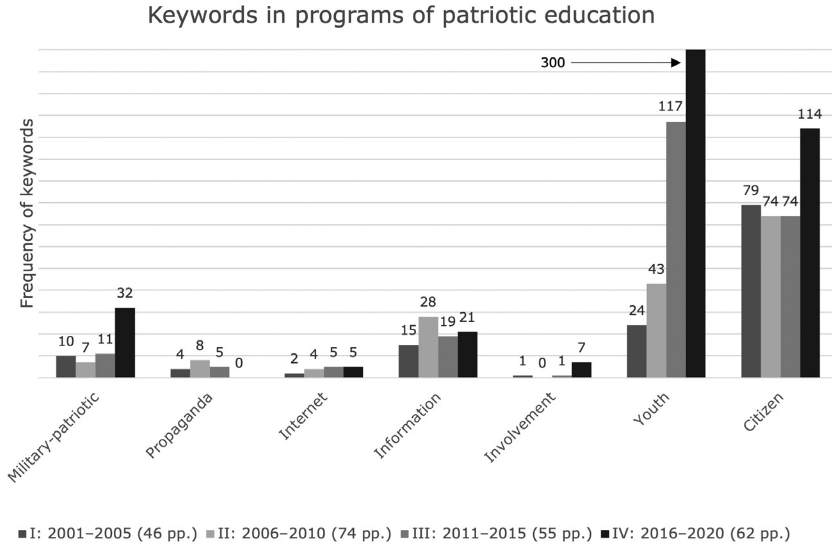

Figure 3: Frequency of keywords per programme of patriotic education.

Source: State programs of patriotic education 2001–2020 (Patriotičeskoe vospitanie 2001–2005, 2006–2010, 2011–2015, and 2016-2020). Figure by the author.

Note: Length of each programme in pages in the brackets.

comparing the frequencies of seven keywords that are repeated regularly in the four programmes since 2001 (see Figure 3).

Almost identical frequencies of certain keywords (like *military-patriotic* and *propaganda* between the first and the third programmes, or *citizen* between the second and third programmes) imply a copy-paste-style repetition of sections used in previous programmes. As such, besides the absence of reasonable parameters of evaluation, this feature is an indication of ritualistic and poor policy planning (Sanina, 2017). Variation between the programmes' page numbers notwithstanding, the most important qualitative change is present in the current program concerning the words *military-patriotic*, *propaganda*, *involvement* (*vovlečenie*), *youth* and *citizen*. Youth's generally recognized importance in patriotic education has been pinpointed further by mentioning *youth* 300 times (see Figure 3 above), as well as the word *citizen* several times more often than in the previous programmes. At the same time, there is a triple increase in mentions of *military-patriotic*

and no mention of *propaganda*. Whereas the foreign political circumstances, in particular the conflict with the West, have had a clear impact on the increase of the military aspect in the fourth programme since 2014, there is a peculiar reflection with regard to ways to increase the role of patriotism among the youth. The identical increase of the term *involvement* – basically absent in the previous programmes – suggests that propaganda as a means of information has not had desirable effects. Such changes in the usage of words indicate that certain problems have been identified and then replaced with some new words and concepts. Yet, these changes hardly make any breakthrough in minds of youngsters as far as the programmes of patriotic upbringing are not only stuck on premises that weakly respond to youth's expectations and understanding of patriotism; in light of the fourth and current programme, it seems that patriotic expectations are moving even further from young people's lives.

The survey Patriotism in Russia: If the War Comes Tomorrow, conducted by the state-aligned pollster VCIOM in September 2016, showed that the index of patriotism had declined markedly since 2008 (VCIOM, 2016). No matter how credible the given patriotism index is in methodological terms, it shows that patriotic education of young people has not worked particularly effectively. In 2008, this index was 80, in 2013 it was 67 and in 2016 the figure was 62. By looking at the answers between age groups to the questions that examined citizens' willingness to sacrifice in the event of war, the picture is not flattering in terms of patriotism. Especially in younger age groups (18–44 years), less than half were ready to go to the front, and even in the oldest age group (60+) the proportion was only 60% (see Figure 4 below).

Similarly, 39% answered *yes* to whether they would be willing to give a quarter of their salary to the state in the event of a war (41% among the 18–24 age group); 17% were willing to give less (21% among the 18–24 age group) and as many as 31% (29% among the 18–24 age group) were not ready to give anything (ibid.).

In a broader comparative study of Russian values, the country has long been part of a group of other former socialist countries that emphasize security, stability and little interest in universal

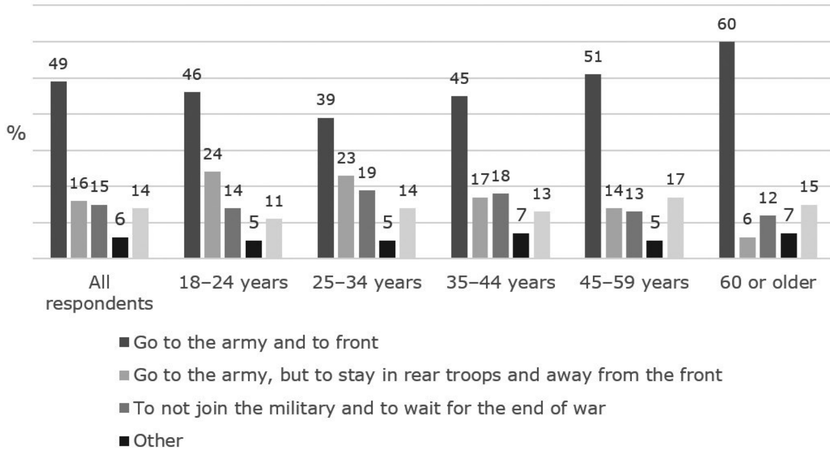

Figure 4: Military-patriotic attitudes in Russia by age group.

Question: 'If the war begins with a neighboring country and your sons, brothers, men, etc. get a command, what would you advise him to do?'

Source: VCIOM (2016). Figure by the author.

affairs (Evropejskij dialog, 2018). The most significant change for Russia is that the aspiration for openness (change of affairs) has begun to strengthen among the Russians, but, on the other hand, there is less interest in universal affairs (growing egoism). If this trend strengthened, it is highly probable that the tension between patriotic policies and youth's expectations would deepen further (Novye izvestiâ, 2018). The fear of youth's egoism, experienced by older generations, can further strengthen moral panic, which maintains the idea of treating youth according to practices of the Soviet-era patriotic upbringing. Consequently, these ideals are increasingly distant from youth's expectations.

Discussion: the Growing Gap between Official Visions and Youth's Expectations

Many empirical examples of projects related to patriotism highlight the common '*pokazuha*' (window dressing) culture of the Soviet era, which was used by various actors in the command economy to ensure the continuation of their own operating conditions

for the eyes of producers (not customers!). In accordance with this tradition, high-profile projects under ministries emphasize quantitative objectives for the political leadership. At the local level, regional authorities and educational institutions formally build a credible framework for the ministry. Examples include the Ûnarmiâ project, initiated by the Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, in 2016, and the revival of the Soviet-era Politruk institution in the army in the spirit of the present patriotic policy in 2018 after extensive lobbying (see Jonna Alava, Chapter 9, and Arseniy Svynarenko, Chapter 8, this volume).[14]

It can be expected that civic education, embraced by patriotic upbringing, will face major problems by 2030. The majority of its teachers and implementers represent the Soviet-era generations, who will move aside over the next 10–15 years. The acute problem in many areas is the shortage of teachers and there are persistent difficulties getting younger teachers into schools owing to low salaries. It is noteworthy that, in 2017, the average age of teachers in Moscow was 36, whereas in Russia as a whole it was 52, while it is estimated that in a third of the country's educational institutions the average age of teachers is between 50 and 60 years. A tenth of teachers, in turn, work in retirement age (Gazeta.ru, 2017). In remote areas, where the population has been more inclined to adapt to state propaganda and the Soviet-era educational patterns, the ageing of teachers is a particularly acute problem (Sanina, 2017). Again, in generational terms, it can be suggested that conservative and patriotic patterns of education become emphasized in rural areas, where the mean age of teachers is significantly higher than in metropolises.

The greatest challenge of patriotic politics and its implementation is the expectations of the youth. Owing to the lack of reciprocity and feedback from youth, of genuine commitment and determined implementation of projects, as well as the inability to include youth, these educational goals are inadequate and in many respects unrealistic (for instance, in terms of the Ûnarmiâ project, see Meduza, 2017). One might ask whether the current regime, which is increasingly sensitive to maintaining its authoritarian status, is ready for any kind of genuine delegation and greater

autonomy for lower-level actors in the field of national security. This is primarily related to ways in which patriotic education could be developed, for example in the spirit of voluntary national defence. The patriotic euphoria that appeared in the aftermath of the invasion of Crimea has not strengthened the authorities' confidence in the patriotic activities and hobbies of the citizens. Quite the opposite: coercive measures have been increased to any activities independent from the state.

As a whole, young people see patriotism and willingness to defend their country in a positive light, but their perception and viewpoints do not fit with the administrative-bureaucratic framework. As previous studies have shown, there is a deep tension between the mainstream ethos of patriotism supported by the state and citizens' individual choices. Russians in general identify themselves as patriotic individuals, yet only a tiny minority participates in any patriotic activities. In a similar vein, the patriotic objectives of schools and educational institutions are seen positively, but their ways of doing things are seen as distant and bureaucratic for youth's daily lives.

In this respect, the state's political ideals are deeply distracted by the mistrust of the rulers towards the self-organization of citizens. One can see here a deep-seated fear of counter-revolutionary elements in the political tradition of Russian authoritarian governance. The more insecure the elite itself perceives, the more sensitive it is in controlling what it feels as threatening to its position. This kind of distrust was also apparent in activities of the pro-Kremlin patriotic youth organizations, whose goals and ideas of youth's independence and self-activity were vitiated by the top-down patronage, continuous reorganizations and eventual closures of activities.

Patriotic education acts as a political ideal, but, as a framework for political mobilization serving government, it involves risks that the administration avoids. The question may not be about the willingness and enthusiasm of the youth for national defence and 'practical patriotism' (59% of Russians declared their readiness to fight for their country in 2015, the fourth highest in Europe after Finland, Turkey and Ukraine).[15] Rather, the issue is about bad governance, corruption and poor institutional confidence.

Taking into account Russia's political developments in 2017–2020, it is reasonable to assume that the gap between those who matured during the Soviet era and are still in political power and those who are maturing under this power will intensify in the coming years. There is a growing demand for change for the country's internal problems, while this demand is increasingly rejected by the state's conservative-patriotic ideals.

Notes

[1] Valentin Semënov is a professor at the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethno-Sociology (Saint Petersburg State University).

[2] There have been four state programmes of patriotic upbringing since 2001. The first five-year programme was launched in 2001, the second in 2006, the third in 2011 and the fourth in 2016.

[3] Article 67 of the new Constitution includes the following amendments (Polnyi tekst popravok, 2020): The Russian Federation, united by a thousand-year history, preserving the memory of the ancestors who transmitted to us the ideals and faith in God, as well as the continuity in the development of the Russian state, recognizes the historically established state unity; The Russian Federation honors the memory of the defenders of the Fatherland, and protects the historical truth. Diminishing the significance of the feat of the people in the defense of the Fatherland is not allowed; Children are the most important priority of the state policy of Russia. The state creates conditions conducive to the comprehensive spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development of children, the education of patriotism, citizenship and respect for elders in them. The state, ensuring the priority of family education, assumes the responsibilities of parents in relation to children left without care.

[4] This figure is derived from the assumption that all those who are against the idea of the state's patriotic upbringing (51%, including those who could not answer) would also share the idea of seeing patriotism as a deeply individual matter (80%).

[5] An umbrella organization of searchers for remains of soldiers of the Second World War.

[6] The National Guard of the Russian Federation, which was established in 2016 as the internal military force of the Russian government but whose actual commander-in-chief is the president.

[7] At the time of the research, these concerned veterans from the Afghanistan and Chechen wars (Sieca-Kozlowski, 2010).
[8] Personal interview, 4 November 2011. See also Carleton (2017, pp. 88–97) concerning the critical assessment of the Soviet triumphalist war narrative.
[9] This metaphor was said to be invented by a visible nationalist commentator, Egor Holmogorov, who became a sort of incarnation of the change that happened among oppositional ethnic nationalists. For instance, during the mass protests in 2011–2012 Holmogorov supported Aleksej Navalʹnyj's liberal-nationalist agenda while, by 2014, he had become one of Navalʹnyj's loudest critics among nationalists.
[10] Internationalism is present in three state programmes of patriotic upbringing except the last and current one (2016–2020). This does not mean, however, that the current programme would be 'less Soviet' in comparison to previous ones. Quite the opposite. For instance, the current programme introduces the physical culture training programme *Ready for Labour and Defense* (*Gotov k trudu i oborone*), which was used in the Soviet Union from 1931 up to the end of the Soviet Union.
[11] See Salla Nazarenko, Chapter 7, in this volume.
[12] Through the internet it was possible to find out birth years of 19 participants. Only one participant was born in the 1980s (1987). In other words, people in the age of around 57 are relatively strongly rooted in the Soviet-era education patterns. For a more detailed description, see Sanina (2017).
[13] The primary example is the Moral Codex of Builder of Communism, introduced in the Soviet Union in 1961.
[14] GLAVPUR's declared goals are to foster the principles of statehood, spirituality and patriotism among the military. The central role in the lobby for its establishment was played by General Andrej Kartapolov (b. 1963), who became the head of the new department. For more, see (Bobrakov-Timoškin, 2018; Kartapolov and Faličev, 2018).
[15] For more, see http://brilliantmaps.com/europe-fight-war.

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CHAPTER 6

A Growing Militarism?

Changing Meanings of Russian Patriotism in 2011–2017

Eemil Mitikka and Margarita Zavadskaya

Abstract

Since the early 2000s, the Kremlin has sought to make patriotism an overarching national ideology for Russia. In recent years, the state-promoted patriotism has become increasingly militaristic and the external threats have been more and more emphasized in the Kremlin's discourse. At the same time, some streams of literature suggest that the majority of Russians have actually embraced the state's vision of militaristic patriotism and the regime-promoted idea of strong political leadership over democratic rule. Drawing on previous research and fresh and nationally representative survey data, we examine how public perceptions of patriotism relate to state-promoted patriotism and the preference

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for political authoritarian leadership in contemporary Russia. Our results indicate that, while the Kremlin-promoted militaristic component of patriotism has slightly increased among the Russian public since the political events of 2014, it still differs from the state-imposed patriotism in many ways and remains more diverse across Russian society. Furthermore, the notion of patriotism in mass opinion has remained by and large the same despite the 'rallying around the flag' after the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Keywords: patriotism, militarism, Russia, authoritarianism, World Values Survey

Introduction

Large-scale social and economic changes affect national identity politics. In the 1990s, the Russian society faced severe social and economic hardships that left deep scars within society (see e.g. Kainu et al., 2017). Russia's first president, Yeltsin, also ended up having troubles in securing the agreement of the State Duma on the new national symbols and was eventually even forced to adopt them by presidential decree (Goode, 2018, p. 263). Thus, it is no wonder that many Russians consider the 1990s 'the most unpatriotic time in Russian history' (ibid.). However, the Kremlin started to take a more active role in moulding patriotic sentiments after the inauguration of Putin in the early 2000s. State programmes for patriotic upbringing, pro-Kremlin youth movements such as Naši and Walking Together (Idušie vmeste) and paramilitary youth organizations akin to Ûnarmiâ (Youth Army) exemplify the militaristic turn in the Kremlin's national identity politics.[1] After the annexation of Crimea in 2014 the defensive component and securitization took an even more central place in the official state discourse.

At the same time, however, the recent studies on Russian patriotism (Goode, 2018; Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume) suggest that the vernacular understandings of patriotism differ largely from the official discourse imposed by the Kremlin. For instance, in spite of the Kremlin's attempts to underline the geopolitical and national security aspects of patriotism in recent years (Sanina, 2017,

pp. 45–48), Goode (2018, p. 269) suggests that many Russians actually perceive patriotism primarily as a love for their local living area, whereas Russia as a whole is felt 'too abstract and distant to be meaningful'. Hence, a degree to which the official discourse does really penetrate 'everyday patriotism' or even a variety of vernacular understandings remains an open question. As Goode observes,

> When examining closely the ways that ordinary Russians explain and illustrate their understandings of patriotism and what it means to be a patriot, one finds a curious mix of individualism and conformity that goes well beyond opaque public opinion polling. … Having situated themselves as relatively isolated or marginalized in relation to fellow citizens, Russians instead embrace an individualist, localized, and apolitical patriotism that takes shape through daily practices related to loving the motherland, daily life, and sacrificing public choice. (Goode, 2016, p. 423)

Given these discrepancies in official (state-imposed) and unofficial (citizen perceptions) understandings of patriotism, our study aims to examine to what extent the Russian public has adopted the Kremlin-presented ideas on militarized patriotism and how the mass perceptions of patriotism have changed over time in Russia. In order to answer this question, we analyse representative survey data from the three waves – 2006, 2011 and 2017 – of the World Values Survey (henceforth WVS) for the Russian Federation. Our choice of nationally representative data opens up new opportunities to investigate patriotic sentiments of Russians across time. These data also allow us to compare the respondents' attitudes in 2011, when the For Fair Elections movement erupted, to the post-Crimean attitudes in 2017. Both events mark dramatic changes in the Russian political regime and patriotic sentiments in Russia. The first point in time is the biggest anti-establishment protest movement in post-Soviet Russia (BBC, 2011), whereas the annexation of Crimea led to a vigorous rallying around the flag and a rising support for political institutions (Cogita!ru, 2016; Sirotkina and Zavadskaya, 2020). In particular, the public's seemingly unanimous approval of the annexation of the Crimean peninsula has led some Russia observers to conclude that the

majority of Russians actually prefer strong authoritarian leadership over democratic rule, and the regime allegedly corresponds to these genuine preferences with strong undemocratic leadership (see e.g. Gessen, 2017; Snegovaya, 2020).

Along with the main turning points in socio-economic development in Russia, the domestic political regime has undergone dramatic changes as well. From the attempts to consolidate governability and to uphold minimal electoral democracy in the early 2000s, the regime has evolved into competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way, 2010) after 2007 and full-blown hegemonic autocracy after 2012 (Gel'man, 2014). At the state level, consolidation of authoritarianism went hand in hand with the militarization of the state-sponsored patriotism. In this process, state-sponsored programmes for patriotic upbringing, pro-Kremlin paramilitary organizations and similar initiatives serve and justify the state's interests.

Yet, it remains an open question whether patriotic sentiments intersect with preferences for stronger or a more autocratic rule among the Russian population. Therefore, in this chapter, we examine:

1) how the military component relates to the notion of patriotism and whether its weight has increased over time;
2) how preferences for autocratic political system intermingle with patriotism: are the supporters of authoritarian rule actually more patriotic? Furthermore, are Russian patriots more autocratic in their policy preferences in general than their less patriotic countrymen?

In this chapter we argue that, although the connection between public preferences for authoritarian rule and stronger patriotic attitudes has strengthened slightly since 'the rally around the flag' in 2014, it remains very ephemeral. Additionally, in comparison with the state's official discourse, Russian patriotism mostly relates to the notions of pride, dignity and self-esteem, rather than willingness to fight for Russia (see e.g. Ponarin and Komin, 2018). Lastly, perceived threats and fear reinforce the exclusive form of

patriotism and strengthen the link with a preference for authoritarian rule in Russia. We begin with the theoretical underpinnings of the notions of patriotism and preferences for authoritarian rule, and then we proceed with data description and methodology, followed by an empirical analysis of the survey data and interpretation of the findings.

Russian patriotism: the state discourse vs. popular views

Although the studies on patriotism are extensive, there is no agreement on the common approach and definition of the concept. Even the early studies suggested that patriotism has both militaristic and civic connotations. For example, Curti (1946) distinguished between 'military' and 'civic' forms of patriotism, whereas Morray (1959) contrasted a patriotism of imitation and obedience with a patriotism of innovation and disobedience. Adorno et al. (1950, p. 107), in turn, differentiated between 'pseudo' patriotism (i.e. blind attachment and uncritical conformity) and 'genuine' patriotism (love of country and attachment to national values based on critical understanding). Hence, the word 'patriotism' seems to be associated with both militarized (e.g. 'military', 'protection', 'war') and civic (e.g. 'love', 'respect', 'pride') themes (Schatz, Staub and Lavine, 1999, p. 154).

However, since a detailed overview of patriotism studies is obviously beyond the scope of this chapter, we will not offer extensive literature review of patriotism here. Instead, we will focus on investigating how militarized Russian patriotism actually is according to our data, and whether Russian patriots prefer authoritarian rule over democracy. As discussed earlier, the previous research maintains that, while the state-imposed patriotism has become increasingly militarized, the everyday understandings of patriotism are somewhat more peaceful in Russia. Hence, our main focus in this chapter is to map out to what extent the Kremlin-declared goals translate into public perceptions of patriotism among Russians. In other words, we seek to investigate

whether there has been a similar growth in militarized attitudes in public perceptions of patriotism as has been observed with Russian political elite.

These state-sponsored programmes play a declarative role and prioritize further state actions and policies. However, it remains an open question how and to what extent these declared goals may translate into an 'everyday' vision of patriotism. Apart from the state initiatives for promoting patriotism mentioned earlier, there have been some major events bolstering patriotic ideas and sentiments in recent years in Russia. For example, in 2014 Russia hosted the Sochi Olympics with an impressive opening ceremony. The Olympic host's performance was also highly successful: altogether it garnered 13 gold medals, which was a record in those games (Gessen, 2017, p. 427). The games had important meaning for the Russian public: according to the independent Russian pollster Levada-Center (Levada-Center, 2017, p. 9), the majority of respondents mentioned the Sochi Olympics as the most important event of 2014.[2]

Nevertheless, the main event that led to an unprecedented patriotic rallying was the annexation of the Crimean peninsula that followed the Sochi Olympics, and the successive eruption of the military conflict in eastern Ukraine only strengthened the sense of external threat and 'the common enemy'. The Olympics and Crimean events had noteworthy consequences for Russian national identity politics. The Sochi doping scandal strengthened the shift towards more isolationist policies, and the annexation of Crimea caused a massive 'rally-around-the-flag' effect that led to a landslide reaction, changes in Russian domestic policies towards the opposition and clashes within the opposition itself (Sirotkina and Zavadskaya, 2020). Although the Kremlin's grip on the public sphere had already tightened after the 2011–2012 electoral protests, the seizure of the peninsula, the subsequent war in eastern Ukraine and confrontation with the West established an even more important demarcation point in the Russian domestic politics.

The 2000s are described as a decade of 'softer' and competitive authoritarianism, which took a more repressive form after the

protests of 2011–2012, and especially after the Crimean events in 2014 (Rogov et al., 2016, p. 5). The post-Crimean period – the period after the year 2014 – has been labelled in the previous research 'a consolidation of authoritarianism' in Russia (ibid.). The change in the Kremlin's politics after the 2011–2013 protests, in turn, has been described as an 'ideological', 'cultural' or 'conservative' turn (Engström, 2014; Laine and Saarelainen, 2017; Robinson, 2017). Indeed, the doping scandals of the Sochi Olympics, the war in Ukraine and the related countersanctions may have increased the public perception that Russia is being discriminated against in the international arena. For example, according to the Levada-Center, in 2016 almost one third of Russians thought that the World Anti-Doping Agency's doping accusations were 'groundless and arouse hostile attitude towards Russia' and over 50% perceived that the Western sanctions against Russia were 'targeted against broad strata of Russian population'[3] (Levada-Center, 2017, pp. 143, 217).

Given the aforementioned trajectories in Russian domestic and foreign policies, it has become almost commonplace to share the view that a new patriotic upsurge stems or overlaps with an authoritarian and militaristic turn, not only among the Russian elites but among the Russian population as well (Gudkov, Dubin and Levada, 2007; Rose, Mishler and Munro, 2011). In other words, after 2014 official discourse seemed finally to converge with the mass vision. The latter implies that Russian citizens share congruent political values with Russian elites, and the elites respond to this public demand for more authoritarian rule.

Nonetheless, even if authoritarian practices and the largely instrumental use of patriotic rhetoric by the Kremlin and state media do not bring much doubt, it remains questionable to what extent the Russian populace accepts the imposed rhetoric and official patriotic narratives. Previous research has shown that elite and mass preferences and moods may diverge or change with significant time lags (Sokolov et al., 2018). As some scholars claim, in the early 1990s 'a substantial fraction within the elite was hopeful to get somehow integrated into the club of privileged

nations led by the West, which further constrained the spread of anti-Western rhetoric' (Ponarin and Komin, 2018, p. 6), but later Russian elites experienced disillusionment and embraced a more isolationist rhetoric. On the other hand, before the consolidation of contemporary authoritarianism in Russia, the elites had limited capacities to tilt public opinion towards a more conservative discourse. After 2014, the regime acquired more capacity and opportunities to impose official narratives. However, did Russian patriotism accordingly take a more militaristic turn? And does this imply stronger support for authoritarian rule?

It is necessary to note here that the connection between support for authoritarian rule and patriotism is far from straightforward. Nationalism or patriotism may have authoritarian notions and practices implying more ideas of cultural supremacy (imperial nationalism) or even prioritization based on ethnic grounds (Anderson, 2006). On the other hand, civic nationalism is usually believed to be more compatible with democratic rule and the idea of civil rights and freedoms (Gellner, 1983). Official discourse as well as public attitudes keep oscillating between an 'imperial' or 'ethnic' version of nationalism (Ponarin and Komin, 2018) and an 'everyday patriotism' and statist vision of patriotism (Goode, 2016). For instance, 'real' or authentic patriotism implies such practices as choosing, living and improving one's place of residence, while participating in public actions and performances is seen by Russian citizens as 'inauthentic' and imposed patriotism. As Goode claims, Russian patriotism is detached from democratic or authoritarian orientations, as it instead touches upon tolerance and the acceptance of motherland 'as it is' and implies deeply apolitical and private linkages between a person and homeland (ibid., pp. 443–444).

Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to explore the dynamics of the elites' preferences. On the other hand, there is already robust evidence that the predominant version of the patriotic narrative that is transmitted through the mass media and official addresses of the president and other state officials to the public is highly militarized, anti-Western, and defensive (Kolstø and Blakkisrud, 2017). The state-promoted initiatives that actively engage

with children and adolescents include for example Ûnarmiâ (a patriotic youth movement including summer camps and regular training for schoolgirls and -boys), history textbooks for schools with a special emphasis on the Great Patriotic War, the Immortal Regiment (*bessmertnyj polk*) marches,[4] and presidential grants and other public funds for a variety of patriotic organizations. Since the militaristic and authoritarian turn in the elites' vision of patriotism is visible and well documented, it is crucial to understand how it echoes in the popular vision by means of representative countrywide surveys.

As discussed earlier, the notion of patriotism has both militarized and civic connotations. Since patriotism still includes both aspects of national identity – inclusive (pride for one's motherland) and exclusive (superiority of one's nation) – we use a broader range of question items that potentially capture the concept. Therefore, we believe that four question items reflect a large variety of connotations that builds up the notion of a more multidimensional concept of patriotism. These items are as follows (for details, see the codebook (Table 3 and Table 4) in the Appendix):

- Being proud of one's country (national pride).
- Willingness to fight for one's country (henceforth: willingness to fight).
- Trust in the army.
- Preference for a strong political leader (authoritarianism).

National pride is the most common indicator of nationalism or patriotism and is widely used in comparative survey studies (see e.g. Fabrykant and Magun, 2019). Willingness to fight and trust in the army serve as proxies for the state-promoted militarization we aim to grasp empirically. We assume that these two indicators could each become more closely connected with national pride. By tracing the degree of connectedness between militarization and national pride we are able to draw conclusions on possible convergence between the state-imposed discourse and popular vision. Lastly, preference for a strong leader shows the dynamics of preference for authoritarian rule in Russia. The latter operates as an additional check on whether the patriotic turn of the 2014

paved the way to higher support, not only for Putin but for the authoritarian regime in general.

It must be noted that there are alternative indicators of self-identification with the motherland or patriotism. First, anti-immigrant sentiments may catch the exclusive form of national identity. However, this notion is rarely associated with the term patriotism in the Russia context. Second, feeling of closeness to a person's hometown, village or city (*malaâ rodina*)[5] demonstrates alternative and not necessarily militarized forms of patriotism (Goode, 2016). However, we deliberately drop this dimension as it is outside the main research focus. Finally, anti-Western attitudes capture a more imperialistic vision of patriotism and nationalism. Unfortunately, these question items are not available in the WVS surveys. However, these might have served as additional indicators of negative self-identification following the logic 'us against them'.

It is also important to bear in mind that the political regime heavily affects the way respondents evaluate democracy. Previous studies have demonstrated that questioning whether respondents support autocracy as a form of political system cannot produce reliable results as the term autocracy contains strong negative connotations. Evidence from the cross-national surveys confirm this observation, as the popular endorsement of democracy is a dominating form of government in spite of the actual level of democracy of the respondent's home country (Rose, Mishler and Munro, 2011, pp. 23–26). At the same time, when asked about democracy in Western countries, respondents may also share varied views and understandings of the term (Ferrín and Kriesi, 2016). The problem aggravates when it comes to comparing autocracies with established democracies as there is little equivalence in the meaning of democracy. For instance, in most authoritarian countries support for democracy (whose meaning is unspecified in the survey question) could be even higher than in real democracies (Kirsch and Welzel, 2019), although it should not be interpreted that respondents share the same notion of democracy. This is specifically relevant to societies that have never experienced

electoral democracy as respondents may either idealize democracy or endow the notion of democracy with additional meanings: apart from civil rights, freedoms and political competition, this can be complemented by equality, economic prosperity and even connotations that have nothing in common with a general understanding of democracy (ibid.).

In this study, we stick to the question on political leadership as a proxy measure of a stronger preference for authoritarianism. This approach has been widely used in analysing democratic transitions in post-Communist Europe and keep track of how democratic values spread and take roots in these societies (e.g. Haerpfer, 2003). We prefer to resort to the concept of strong political leadership that taps into individual proclivities to support political authoritarian regime. Most people who genuinely support dictatorial rule, including dictators themselves, often refer to their regime as democratic. In this sense, support for strong political leadership coupled with other questions such as preferences for the rule by experts, clergy or the military helps avoiding ambiguous interpretations.

As discussed above, the elite and vernacular understandings of patriotism may differ from each other substantially. In order to keep track on how popular attitudes have evolved, we compiled the aggregate time-series data of the four indicators of our interest – national pride, willingness to fight, trust in army, and preference for a strong leader. Figure 5 demonstrates that, while the feeling of national pride has increased significantly since the 1990s, the willingness to defend Russia in the event of war has been in decline since the early 1990s, with its lowest value at 53% in 2011. However, the share had increased by more than 10% by 2017, thereby having returned to its initial values of the 'unpatriotic 1990s'. Trust in the army remained quite stable since the 1990s until its increase from 63% to 75% in 2017.

At the same time, the preference for a strong leadership had been going down in the 1990s, while it went up to almost half of the respondents in 2006, then peaked at 67% in 2011. However, against expectations, it declined by nearly 20% between 2011 and

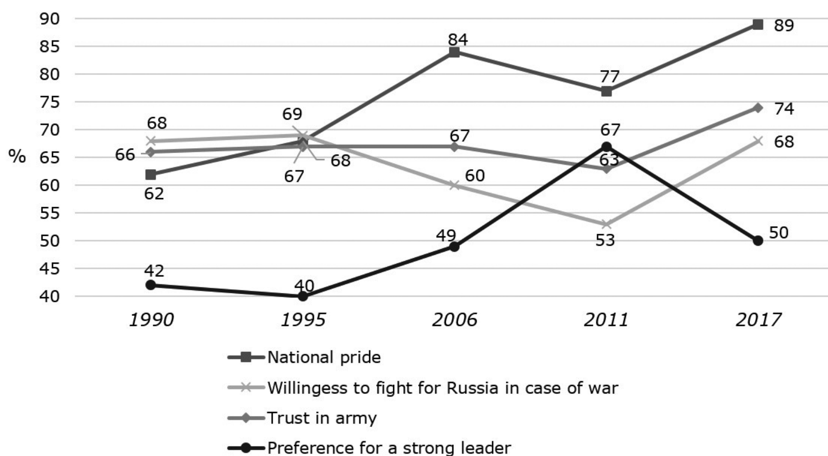

Figure 5: National pride, willingness to fight, trust in the army and preference for strong leader: dynamics from 1990 to 2017.

Source: WVS time-series (1981–2020) data (Inglehart et al., 2020). Figure by the authors.

Note: National pride, preference for a strong leader and trust in army are collapsed categories of the two most positive answers in a four-point scale. The trend line for willingness to fight for country is depicted as 'Yes' answers to a dichotomous question item ('Yes/No').

2017. The latter observation contradicts the view on historical preferences for strong authoritarian leadership among the Russian population that change little in time, embodied in such political slogans as 'strong president, strong Russia'.[6] To sum up, national pride has dramatically increased and reached almost 90% of respondents, while militarization indicators have somewhat increased after 2011, but not as sharply as national pride and the overall share is lower. We would rather say that military attitudes went back to the values observed in the 1990s, while national pride, indeed, has grown quite noticeably. Authoritarian attitudes, vice versa, are not in sync with other indicators and have even declined.

However, descriptive statistics do not allow us to see how these indicators are connected with patriotism. This is why we go beyond these statistics by exploring how strongly military connotations overlap with patriotism and by building regression models to see whether the patriotic turn facilitated the consolidation of authoritarianism from the public opinion perspective.

The data and methodology

The data for our analyses are drawn from the last three waves of the WVS in the years 2006, 2011 and 2017. Our data allow us to not only see how patriotism changed after the annexation of Crimea but to explore the dynamics of patriotic attitudes before the massive anti-regime protests against the unfair elections in December 2011–March 2012. Accordingly, the year 2006 is the last year that the Russian political regime qualified for electoral democracy and made a transition to fully fledged authoritarian rule.

We begin our investigation by conducting a principal component analysis (PCA) for each WVS wave to find out how the different indicators of patriotism relate to each other. More precisely, we seek to explore the degree to which military connotations overlap with national pride. PCA is a conventional statistical tool that aims at reducing the number of variables that strongly correlate with each other. In our case, many question items capture the underlying notion of patriotism. Drawing on previous studies (e.g. Fabrykant and Magun, 2019), we included three variables that strongly relate to the sense of patriotism: willingness to fight for Russia, trust in the army and national pride. Willingness to defend the motherland and trust in the armed forces are used to capture militaristic attitudes, while national pride is used to measure self-esteem and dignity aspects of patriotism.

Figure 6 demonstrates the relative weight of each question in the underlying notion of patriotism. This relative weight is reflected through PCA loadings that are mapped on the graph. Loadings vary from +1 to −1, where positive values stand for a positive relation between the variable and an overall phenomenon (here: patriotism), while negative values indicate a negative relation. Large absolute values of PCA loadings indicate that a variable contributes a lot to the underlying phenomenon and describes it better. In our case, this method allows us to see how militarized Russian patriotism is according to our data.

As can be seen from the figure below (Figure 6), there is a clear connection between national pride and trust in the army, whereas willingness to fight loads strongly in the opposite direction. This indicates that national pride and trust in army represent different

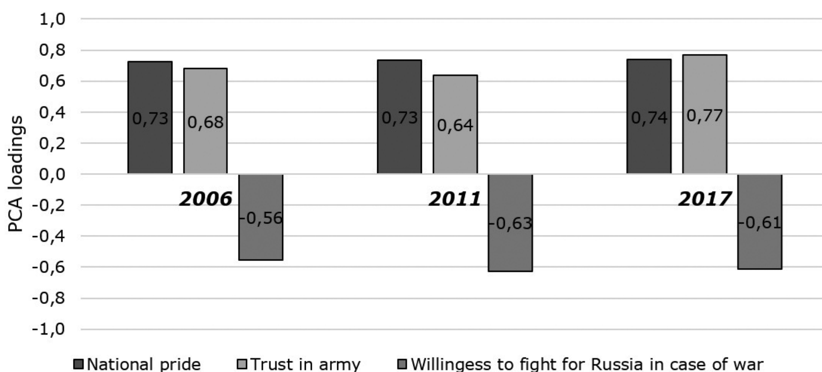

Figure 6: PCA (principal component analysis) loadings in the index of patriotism across survey waves (years 2006, 2011 and 2017).

Source: WVS time-series (1981–2020) data (Inglehart et al., 2020). Figure by the authors.

dimensions of patriotism than willingness to defend and sacrifice for the motherland. Trust in army and national pride both contribute to Russian patriotism. The relationship between these variables has also remained quite stable during the 10 years covered in our analysis – although the role of trust in the army proved a bit stronger in 2017 (0.77 in 2017 against 0.64 in 2011). Essentially, military connotations are mostly related to trust in the army and pride, rather than desire to fight. The latter even negatively correlates with patriotism. The Crimean annexation does not seem to have affected the rise of military moods within the population. Against our expectation, there is no militaristic turn in popular views from the perspective of patriotism.

Between Patriotism and Authoritarianism: Do Russian Patriots Support Authoritarian Rule?

Drawing on the literature, we formulate the following set of hypotheses or propositions for further empirical tests. First, we expect Russian patriotism to be consistent with the notions of pride (positive self-identification or loving motherland 'as it is'), while willingness to fight for Russia and trust in the army to capture military notions of patriotism (i.e. 'activating and performing', according to Goode, 2016). We also expect that the relative weight

of each component would change before and after the annexation of Crimea so the military component would gain more importance. Second, we hypothesize that the connection between authoritarianism and patriotism strengthened after 2014. More broadly speaking, those who prefer strong political leadership, other things being equal, tend to be more patriotic. Third, 'the rallying around the flag' is connected to the common understanding of external threat and necessity to at least temporarily unite against an enemy. We expect higher levels of anxiety and threat perceptions to be positively associated with higher patriotism.

Following the results obtained from the PCA, we build up a weighted index of patriotism. As we mentioned earlier, survey data provide less flexibility than interviews or ethnographic observation in exploring how people define patriotism themselves as surveys restrict the choice of questions and their phrasing. Nevertheless, if one includes a maximum number of items that might potentially refer to the notion of patriotism, one still manages to identify the phenomenon. The index consists of three survey items: willingness to fight for respondent's country (dichotomous variable), trust in the army (four-item scale) and pride for respondent's country (four-item scale). All variables are reversed and rescaled before running a principal component analysis (see Appendix for the exact coding of the variables). The latter allows us to reduce the number of highly correlated variables and, at the same time, to explore the extent to which these three components reflect the notion of patriotism shared by respondents. A resulting index is a continuous variable, so we use simple ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression with year-dummies.[7]

Our main independent variable, preference for authoritarianism, is operationalized through a question item about political system and whether having a strong leader is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad (for details, see 'coding of variables' in the Appendix). This measure has been conventionally used to approximate popular preferences for a more autocratic rule in the context of democratic transitions in Eastern Europe (Haerpfer, 2003).

We also take into account an overall interest in politics that varies from 'not at all interested' to 'very interested'. Previous research literature has also indicated that professional occupation, gender,

age and domicile are, to varying extents, related to levels of patriotism. For instance, rich and urban families are less willing to send their children into military service than the poorer families of the countryside, older generations were socialized to extensive Soviet patriotism, and public servants are expected to promote patriotic values in today's Russia (Emcov and Lokšin, 2006; Sanina, 2017; Svynarenko, 2016). Thus, we use gender, age, income, size of domicile and employment sector as control variables in our model. Since there is some evidence that more educated Russians are more willing to leave the country (The Insider, 2016), in theory we could have controlled for education as well. Unfortunately, the measures of education level differ from one WVS wave to another, so we had to leave them out from the analysis. Finally, in order to estimate how the annexation of Crimea, countersanctions, the Sochi doping scandal and the subsequent 'rallying around the flag' have affected the formation of threat perceptions and enemy images, we examine whether respondents had concerns regarding a war involving Russia, civil war or terrorist attacks. These variables allow us to control the degree of anxiety and perceived threat and their changes in time.

Figure 6 shows how the index of patriotism co-varied with authoritarianism in 2011 and 2017, that is, before and after the Crimea annexation. The figure offers a visualization of the relationship between patriotism and preference for authoritarian political system (measured here as preference for strong leader). To recap, patriotism is operationalized here as summated scales of national pride, willingness to fight and trust in the army, and figures in the graph represent factor scores that are drawn from the PCA we conducted earlier on these variables.

From Figure 7 below, we can see that the correlation between preferences for a stronger leader is stronger in 2017 than it was before, as the darkest regression line for the year 2017 is a bit more steeply inclined upwards than the light grey (for 2006) and semi-grey (for 2011) regression lines. Yet, it is important to note that the change is quite modest: for instance, the difference between the correlation coefficient (R^2) in 2011 and 2017 is only 0.02 percentage points. This indicates that respondents who preferred

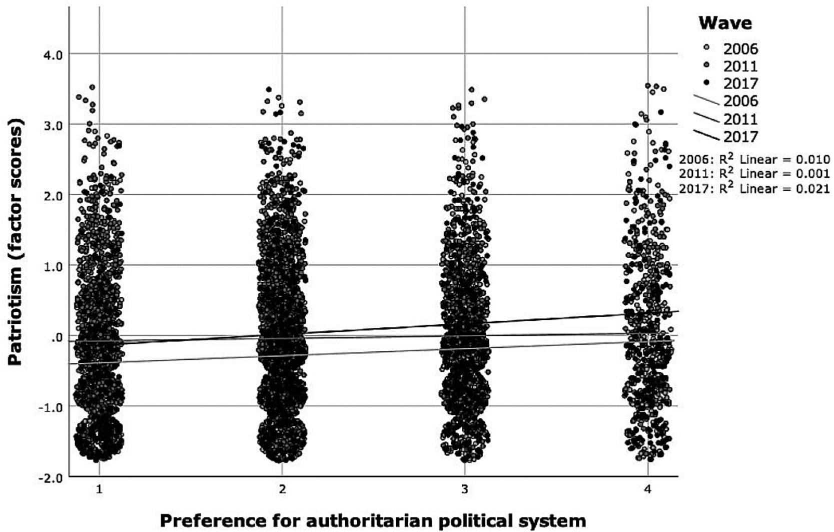

Figure 7: Association between authoritarianism and patriotism: 2006, 2011 and 2017.

Preference for authoritarian political system is operationalized by the question 'What do you think of the following political system as a way of governing Russia: having a strong leader whose power is not limited by parliament or elections?', where 1=Very bad, 2=Fairly bad, 3=Fairly good, 4=Very good.

Source: WVS time-series (1981–2020) data (Inglehart et al., 2020). Figure by the authors.

authoritarian rule after the annexation of Crimea might have been 'politically activated'. However, it would be an exaggeration to claim that there has been a steep 'authoritarian turn' in patriotic public sentiments in Russia after 2014. Instead, our findings suggest quite the opposite – autocrats and patriots are not ultimately the same groups of respondents. In other words, preference for a stronger political leader does not go hand in hand with patriotism.

Next, we present the results of the regression analysis where we estimate the effects of preferences for authoritarianism ('strong political leader is a good way for governing Russia'), time and perceived threats on patriotism. Table 2 contains unstandardized b-coefficients for each predictor, with standard errors in brackets. Asterisks indicate the precision of our estimates, in other

Table 2: Correlates of patriotism: results of OLS regression analysis.

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
VARIABLES	**Patriotism**	**Patriotism**	**Patriotism**	**Patriotism**
WVS year				
2011			−0.03***	0.07*
			(0.01)	(0.04)
2017	0.11***	0.12***	0.08***	0.07**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)
Social background				
Female respondent	−0.04***	−0.04***		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
Age	0.07***	0.08***		
	(0.02)	(0.02)		
Income	−0.01	−0.01		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
Town size 50,000–500,000	−0.08***	−0.08***		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
Town size 500,000 or more	−0.05***	−0.05***		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
Public sector employee	0.04***	0.05***		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
Private or non-profit organization employee	−0.00	−0.00		
	(0.03)	(0.03)		
Political attitudes				
Preference for authoritarianism	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***	0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)
Political interest	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Threat perceptions				
War involving Russia	0.02**			
	(0.01)			
Terrorist attack	0.03***			
	(0.01)			

Table 2. *(Continued)*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
VARIABLES	**Patriotism**	**Patriotism**	**Patriotism**	**Patriotism**
Civil war	−0.02* (0.01)			
2011#Strong leadership				−0.03*** (0.01)
2017#Strong leadership				0.00 (0.01)
N	2,425	2,504	4,220	4,220
R^2	0.095	0.079	0.034	0.036

***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1

Source: WVS time-series (1981–2020) data (Inglehart et al., 2020). Table by the authors.

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. The following two variables are used as reference categories and therefore they are not shown in the table: the 2006 WVS wave and towns with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants.

words whether our findings are statistically significant and can be generalized beyond our sample. Each column presents one of the four model specifications that contain different sets of independent variables to provide additional robustness checks to our estimates. Models 1 and 2 show estimates for the waves of 2011 and 2017 since the question on perceived threats (war involving Russia, civil war, and terrorist attack) were not asked in 2006. These models include all control variables such as gender, age, income, employment type and settlement size. Models 3 and 4 include all the three waves. Model 4 also includes estimates of the interaction terms between time and preference for strong political leader (authoritarianism).

As expected, preferences for strong political leader positively correlate with patriotism: one unit increase on authoritarianism leads to a 0.02-unit increase in patriotism (varies from zero to one). The effect is robust but small, which means that more pro-authoritarian respondents indeed tend to share views that are

more patriotic. This being said, there is still a lot of unexplained variance left. Timing also plays a crucial role in the dynamics of patriotism: the average level of patriotism is expectedly significantly higher in 2017 than in 2011, by 0.11–0.12 points. At the same time, overall patriotism was dramatically lower in 2011 at the times of the post-election protests and the eruption of the For Fair Elections movement. Model 4 shows that interaction between the time of survey and preference for authoritarianism is significant. More authoritarian respondents in 2011 were far less patriotic than in 2006 (please note that a reference category is not shown in Table 2). This is an important finding as we observe that 'autocrats' and 'patriots' are not the same people. In 2011, these groups differed from each other in a dramatic way. The latter implies that in 2011–2012 even those who shared views that were more authoritarian did not share a patriotic vision – and perhaps supported the political regime.

More politically engaged respondents tend to be more patriotic. Therefore, politicization comes along with patriotism, although, again, the effect is small. The more respondents worry about a war involving Russia and terrorist attacks, the more they tend to share patriotic values. Those who worry about a possible civil war, on the other hand, tend to score lower on patriotism. This suggests that patriotism speaks to the defensive self-perceptions of Russians when they position themselves on the international arena. In other words, more patriotic Russians are more prone to think that the possible hostility comes from the *outside* (external threat), whereas less patriotic respondents are more worried about the internal social issues that might cause unrest *within Russian society* and ultimately even lead to a civil war (internal threat). Thus, fear of external threats and strong support for patriotism seem to go hand in hand.

As for the social background control variables, our estimates suggest that public sector employees are on average more patriotic than those employed in the private and non-commercial sectors. This result is somewhat intuitive, as public sector employees are expected to promote the state version of patriotic values (see e.g. Sanina, 2017; Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume). Urban dwellers and

younger respondents are on average less patriotic. Interestingly, income does not seem to affect levels of patriotism. Finally, female respondents are somewhat less patriotic.

There is a dramatic difference between the least and most 'authoritarian' respondents. This finding indicates that the rise of patriotism has occurred mostly due to the most authoritarian respondents, although it is not possible to say that this is a stable group of the population, since our data are not the panel. Nonetheless, at the same time, we observe the rise of patriotic moods among less authoritarian respondents as well. These results are important at least in three ways. First, a stronger connection between patriotism and authoritarianism emerged only after 2014, which indicates that the wider public has at least partially accepted the state's vision. Second, not only those who prefer authoritarian leadership but also Russians who prefer democratic rule are patriots. Third, a correlation between patriotism and support for authoritarianism exists, but it is not strong.

Conclusion

The mass demonstrations in 2011–2012 (the For Fair Elections movement) and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 are the two milestones in the transformation of the Russian regime and society that affected perceptions of patriotism among the elites and citizens. Accordingly, the Sochi Olympics doping scandal, the war in Ukraine and the successive international sanctions may have also increased the feeling of isolation and discrimination in the international arena among Russians. This may also partly explain the connection between patriotism and the fears of war involving Russia and terrorist attacks that we observed in our findings, as other countries are believed to have hostile attitudes in their relations with Russia.

The state's vision of being a patriot has moved from a more inclusive and civic-oriented (to be a good 'stand-up citizen') view towards a more militarized and exclusive one. Our study shows that, while people's vision has also transformed and shifted slightly closer to the state's vision, it still differs from the state-imposed

version of patriotism in certain ways and remains more diverse across society. The very notion of patriotism in the public opinion has remained largely the same regardless of the 'rallying around the flag' in 2014.

Our contribution to the existing research is threefold. First, our research shows that being a Russian patriot does not necessarily imply stronger authoritarian leanings. Accordingly, supporting strong political leadership does not necessarily mean being a patriot. Second, preferences for authoritarianism, other things being equal, remain a strong correlate of high patriotism. Third, fear of external threat is connected with stronger patriotic sentiments, while fear of civil war is negatively related to patriotism.

At the same time, it is important to note that our data and methods have significant limitations. For example, it is obvious that surveys do not perfectly capture all the undertones and nuances of patriotism. Fixed questionnaires do not allow one to explore the whole possible variety of vernacular meanings of patriotism. Surveys also tend to catch respondents' normative views rather than everyday practices that manifest patriotism (e.g. wearing brown-and-black St. George ribbons [*georgievskaâ lentočka*] or supporting domestic producers). These 'practices' are to be studied by means of ethnography.

There are also concerns that citizens respond reluctantly to politically sensitive questions, avoid them or falsify their preferences in social surveys, especially if they are carried out in non-democratic settings (Kuran, 1997; Rogov, 2017). Respondents' unwillingness to answer or hide their true preferences with sensitive survey questions results in higher non-response rates or unreliable data. This fact implies that studying political support and patriotism by relying on surveys may produce questionable findings. Topics related to patriotism, military affairs or support for a regime are subject to self-censorship and may not be adequately reflected in public opinion owing to social desirability bias. The military power of the country, for instance, has also symbolic importance and it can be cited as an important factor in international relations, which may partly explain why the armed forces are one of the most trusted institutions in Russia (Gudkov,

2012). Additionally, it is harder to capture public opinion in the context of more repressive political regimes and especially in situations of high patriotic mobilization (Baum, 2002; Rogov, 2017).

On the other hand, attempts to assess the scale of preference falsification in Russia after the patriotic boom of 2014–2015 demonstrate that real support does not deviate much from the observed figures (Frye et al., 2017). Hence, even though the problems of social desirability and preference falsification are relevant concerns – especially with survey data on undemocratic countries – the fluctuation of patriotic indicators suggests that Russians do not severely hide their opinions when answering social surveys. Nonetheless, further analysis of the survey data and the possibility of distorted results are important issues for future research.

In spite of the above-discussed limitations, we still succeeded in tracing the degree of militarization of patriotic attitudes over time and found out that mass attitudes are somewhat more peaceful than the narrative transmitted by the Russian state. These findings are largely in line with Goode's (2016, 2018) idea on how patriotism 'from below' relies on the sense of self-identification with culture and pride, rather than willingness to fight and sacrifice. Indeed, while Russian patriotism does contain authoritarian connotations, the connection between authoritarianism and patriotism is far from straightforward. Not all patriots share an authoritarian vision of political system and not all who prefer a stronger hand share strong patriotic views. This, in turn, might indicate that the Kremlin-promoted narratives may have been successful in activating at least some groups of Russian society but not the overwhelming majority of Russians.

At the same time, we found that the most important component of patriotism is growing demand for dignity, self-esteem and pride, rather than willingness to fight. As the time-series data earlier in this chapter illustrated (Figure 5), the only patriotism indicator that has increased almost steadily since the 1990s is national pride. Meanwhile, other and more exclusive and militaristic forms of patriotism (willingness to fight for Russia, trust in army) have been more prone to fluctuate with the passage of time and political trends. Moreover, although the willingness to fight has increased

in the period 2011–2017, our findings suggest it is not connected to national pride or to another militaristic component of patriotism, that is, the trust in the armed forces (see Figure 6).

The Russian state has not fully succeeded in imposing its own vision of patriotism upon the citizens. Remarkably, this still holds true even after the massive rallying around the flag in 2014–2015. Even such dramatic events as the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation do not seem sufficient to significantly bolster the state version of identity politics among Russians. On the other hand, spreading the sense of threat and fear may strengthen exclusive aspects of patriotism. In the times of economic downturn and international sanctions in 2014–2016, Russians tended to blame external forces rather than the executive power (Frye et al., 2017; Sirotkina and Zavadskaya, 2020). If the state undertakes additional effort in this direction, this might reinforce, albeit temporarily, the image of the country under siege and thereby strengthen the connection between political support for autocracy and patriotism. Thus, the effects of rallying on overall militarization prove to be short-lived.

As the modernization theory posits, when people acquire more wealth and social and cultural capital, they begin to question the responsiveness and legitimacy of those in power (Inglehart and Welzel, 2010). Russia is one of the few high-capacity and economically developed authoritarian states whose political institutions are at odds with the overall development of economy and human capital. Even the sense of patriotism corresponds to more emancipative connotations of pride and self-expression, rather than militarization and self-sacrifice. This paradox is here to stay and is to be scrutinized in further research.

Notes

[1] The Kremlin-led programmes for patriotic upbringing and the ways the state defines patriotism have been examined recently in detail by Sanina (2017) and Goode (2018), while Lassila discusses changes in Russian identity politics and Alava offers a detailed overview of Ûnarmiâ in this volume. Thus, we will not discuss these subjects at length in this chapter.

[2] Against this proposition, concepts akin to *Homo Sovieticus* (Levada, 1999) advance the view of a long-term historical preferences for a strong authoritarian leadership that barely change over time (see also Gessen, 2017).

[3] In practice, the Western sanctions were more targeted than Russian countersanctions. While the Western sanctions targeted specific individuals and the Russian state-controlled oil companies, the Russian countersanctions targeted not only specific Western individuals but also a large set of daily goods such as agricultural products (see e.g. Overland, 2015).

[4] Ironically, the Immortal Regiment movement emerged in the city of Tomsk in early 2012 as a bottom-up initiative that afterwards merged with a countrywide state-sponsored annual event when participants marched onto the streets holding pictures of their family members who perished or participated in the Great Patriotic War (Nemtsev, 2019).

[5] *Malaâ rodina* means 'little motherland', which often refers to a person's place of birth or current place of residence (see e.g. Goode, 2018, pp. 269, 277).

[6] This was Vladimir Putin's election slogan in the 2018 presidential elections.

[7] Regression analysis is a widely used statistical technique that allows one to estimate the effect of one variable on another. Under certain conditions, regression analysis makes the revelation of causal relations possible. Multivariate regression analysis allows the analysts to estimate causal effects of several variables at the same time (see e.g. Fox, 1997).

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Appendices

Table 3: Coding of variables. Source: WVS time-series (1981–2020) data (Inglehart et al., 2020).

Patriotism	Weighted index built on factor scores of the following variables: • Would you be willing to fight for Russia in case of war? • How proud you are of being Russian? • How much do you trust the Russian armed forces? Index values vary between −1 and +1, where −1=lower sense of patriotism and +1=higher sense of patriotism)
Preference for authoritarianism	What do you think of the following political systems as a way of governing Russia: Having a strong leader whose power is not limited by parliament or elections. • 1=Very bad • 2=Fairly bad • 3=Fairly good • 4=Very good
Year variable	
WVS wave year	WVS wave year for the Russian Federation: • 2006 (reference category) • 2011 • 2017

(*Contd.*)

Table 3. *(Continued)*

Social background	
Gender	0=Female, 1=Male
Age	Age of respondent
Income level	Logged income level
Town size	Whether the respondent lives in a town with a population of: • 50,000–500,000 • 500,000 or more
Professional field	Which of these branch of industries the respondent currently works in: • Public/state-owned institutions (reference category) • Private or non-profit institutions
Political attitudes	
Interest in politics	How interested you are in politics? • 1=Not at all • 2=Not really • 3=More likely yes • 4=Very interested
Preference for authoritarianism	What do you think of the following political systems as a way of governing Russia: Having a strong leader whose power is not limited by parliament or elections. • 1=Very bad • 2=Fairly bad • 3=Fairly good • 4=Very good
Threat perceptions	
War involving Russia	How worried you are about war involving Russia? • 1=Not at all worried • 2=Not very worried • 3=Quite worried • 4=Very worried

Table 3. *(Continued)*

Terrorist attack	How worried you are about terrorist attacks? • 1=Not at all worried • 2=Not very worried • 3=Quite worried • 4=Very worried
Civil war	How worried you are about civil war in Russia? • 1=Not at all worried • 2=Not very worried • 3=Quite worried • 4=Very worried

Table by the authors.

Table 4: Principal component analyses for patriotic indicators by WVS round.

	WVS survey year		
Patriotism variables	**2006**	**2011**	**2017**
National pride	0.73	0.73	0.74
Trust in army	0.68	0.64	0.77
Willingness to fight for Russia in case of war	−0.56	−0.63	−0.61
Eigenvalues	1.30	1.34	1.51
Percentage of variance explained	43.32	44.70	50.38

Source: WVS time-series (1981–2020) data (Inglehart et al., 2020). Table by the authors.

CHAPTER 7

Patriots on Air

Reflections on Patriotism in the Minds of TV Journalists

Salla Nazarenko

Abstract

This chapter analyses patriotic discourses of Russian television journalists. The starting point is that there is a certain pressure to be patriotic imposed upon journalists who work for mainstream television. Three discourses on patriotism have been identified through thematic interviews: a personal, intimate patriotism; a militaristic one; and a patriotism that draws from the narratives of ongoing information war. Russian journalists use all three discourses when they explain their attitude towards patriotism. While journalists express criticism towards militaristic undertones of official discourse, the most prominent figures in television accept and repeat it in their work.

Keywords: journalism, infowar, patriotism, militarism, intimate patriotism

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Introduction

In his book *Pis'ma o russkom patriotizme* (*Letters about Russian Patriotism*), writer Mihail Berg (2010) opens the phenomenon of Russian patriotism in a sharp and ironic way. According to Berg, patriotism requires constant formation of external threat in order to justify itself. When there is a threat, patriotism is needed and it hides under its 'fatty layer' any discontent or social inequality. Berg also underlines that Russian patriotism is geographic:

> The main thing that warms our souls is latitude, indivisibility, and the more we have, the better. That is why there is no apology to former Soviet republics that went away and gave a hoot to everything good done to them, making the Motherland smaller and taking away parts of the formerly native lands. (ibid., p. 13)

Patriotism witnessed by Berg is simple to the point of banality, leaning on dichotomies. He explains it, among other, by the fact that the Soviet system from the very beginning gave the power to the least educated. To Berg, the constant chain of humiliation that has always gone from those ruling to those being ruled leads to the need to humiliate. Berg's book consists of his own observations, but his outlook in historical moments and practices demonstrates well that patriotism and patriotic education are nothing new in Russia (ibid.). Despite the fact that patriotic education and state-led patriotism are sometimes seen and understood as a Putin-era phenomenon, these programmes have their roots much deeper than this in Russia and elsewhere in the world.

In this chapter I shall take a look at how Russian journalists working for mainstream television understand and re-produce with the ideas of patriotism, imposed upon them from above. I chose television as a medium, since despite the changes in viewership – the younger generations in particular seem to be abandoning linear television – it remains the most popular source of news in Russia. In addition to this, during Putin's years in power, TV has increasingly become a tool for promoting Russia's foreign policy (Zakem et al., 2017, p. 1). One turning point was the 2011–2012

protests and another the beginning of the war in Ukraine. Joshua Yaffa calls the moment that fighting broke in Donbass one where 'the Russian media adopted a hysterical and bellicose tone' (Yaffa, 2019, p. 59). Yaffa explains this change as:

> The need for enemies became obvious: to rally the patriotic masses for the struggles that lay ahead. (ibid.)

My assumption was, thus, that there is at least an expectation from above for journalists working for mainstream television that is largely controlled by the state to be patriots, or at least to share patriotic sentiments. Another relevant issue is the question of self-censorship. Previous research (Schimpfossl and Yablokov, 2018; Yaffa, 2020) has shown that there is no self-censorship per se but journalists have created their own sophisticated methods of manoeuvring with the needs of the Kremlin that is more down to the personalities of journalists. This came up in my interviews, too. Nobody admitted having faced coercion of any kind, but many admitted that there is an expectation to do the work in a certain way, and those that disagree will go and work elsewhere.

The research is based on eight thematic interviews with Russian journalists either currently working or having worked with mainstream Russian television channels, conducted between May and September 2018. I asked the journalists about their understanding of the concept of patriotism in general, their personal attitude towards it and the way they see it reflected in their work, if at all. I wanted to find out how the journalists interpret patriotism and how they re-produce it in their work.

During the interviews I asked about the careers of journalists; about their understandings of the meaning of patriotism and patriotic education; about whether Russia is conducting ongoing information warfare; about freedom of speech in Russia and related issues. My main interest lay in patriotism, but I gave journalists room to talk freely about the things the concept brought to their mind. During my analysis I looked for broad thematic patterns that were used by journalists in their interpretations of the theme. As a result, I found three discursive frameworks that

best depict the way journalists understand patriotism. I call them 'intimate patriotism', 'military patriotism' and 'infowar patriotism'.

The first two discourses are clearly a reminiscence of Soviet-era patriotism that underlined the duty of the citizen, on the one hand, and the need to protect the interests of the homeland, on the other (Nikonova, 2010; see also Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume). In a quite similar way as in the Soviet Union, a true patriot is understood as one who cares about the homeland and one's community but is also ready to defend the home country by military means. At the same time, patriotism includes a personal component. As found by Goode (2016) in his focus group interviews about patriotism, the categories of practice elaborated by his interviewees were 'loving', 'activating', 'performing', 'comparing', 'living', 'improving' and 'choosing' (ibid., pp. 430–443). Looking at patriotism this way, it turns into a practice that journalists exercise in their everyday life.

This came up in my data: 'intimate patriotism' was something that the journalists felt was important for them personally. The journalists interviewed wanted to underline that they indeed were Russian patriots – but not necessarily in a way the state would impel them to be. Journalists saw it as the duty of journalists to help society and the community as large. This reflects the Soviet understanding of patriotism as an expectation of universally good behaviour and citizenship. At the same time, official patriotism was reflected in the programmes of patriotic education, where the media is mentioned as one of the important components of patriotic education. The question of how one promotes 'good behaviour' and military patriotism at the same time remains in the education of future journalists (Makarova, 2010, p. 889).

Military patriotism has its roots in the First World War, when Russia declared, following the approach of the French government, a 'sacred union'. According to Stockdale (2016, p. 15), this included three central patriotic components: the traditional union between tsar and people, the patriotism of all Russian people regardless of belief or ethnicity, and the willingness of all Russians to serve and sacrifice. The latter was best manifested by the massive

mobilization and unexpected rash of volunteering that followed. The approach to patriotism by the Soviet Union owes a lot to this.

And, in quite a similar way as in the Soviet Union, in today's Russia, patriotism is an official part of state ideology. According to Nikonova (2010, p. 354), the popularity of the topic has been associated with the intensified search for a national idea since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The post-Yeltsin political leadership needed to develop a long-term strategy to find a universally valid symbolic framework for citizens. The programmes of patriotic education were being born. The first five-year programme was introduced in 2001 by the then prime minister Mihail Kasânov, and the current programme (2016–2020) is the fourth one (International Crisis Group, 2018; Pravitel′stvo Rossijskoj Federacii, 2015).

The military-patriotic discourse owes a great deal to this official patriotic discourse – which again has its roots in Soviet-era patriotism. The theme of patriotism has 'run like a thread' throughout Soviet history and patriotism was promoted as public consciousness, as something that would increase the feeling of belonging to the state and as an ideology that would contribute to people's willingness to defend the state (Sanina, 2017, pp. 33–34).

Interestingly, however, as written by Jussi Lassila in Chapter 5 of this volume, the understanding of patriotism offered by the state is not taken at face value. The citizens prefer their own definition of patriotism. Opinion polls show that, despite Russians agreeing that the state needs patriots and Russia is surrounded by external threats, people reject the state-imposed patriotism (see Mitikka and Zavadskaya, Chapter 6, this volume). Here we come to what I call intimate patriotism: patriotism as a personal attachment.

The third discourse, the one I call infowar patriotism, can be traced to the contemporary political realities of Russia, where the foreign policy principles lean on the idea of competition between countries and constant external threats (Pynnöniemi, 2018). One way to counter these threats is non-military means and hybrid war, which is well described in the so-called 'Gerasimov doctrine', named after general Valery Gerasimov, who elaborated this

'doctrine' in his speech to the Russian military academy after his appointment in January 2013 (Felgenhauer, 2019). Information warfare is seen as both part of the geopolitical struggle between great powers (Pynnöniemi, 2016, p. 41) and as a component of all warfare (Mölder and Sazonov, 2018, p. 309). Soft power instruments are used to promote and protect national interests and measures often referred to as tools of information warfare are used in this. The aspiration to manipulate the public perception of reality is even indicated at the level of strategic documents; however, as rightfully noted by Pynnöniemi and Ràzc (2016), it is not at all clear how this aspiration is being implemented in practice.

The concept of information war is not new in Russia. V.I. Lenin listed the methods of political struggle in his 1906 essay 'On Guerrilla Warfare', where the 'simulation of mass consciousness' was mentioned as a method. In Soviet times, the media was first and foremost a tool for ideological education and public opinion formation, thus the weapon for information war was at all times in the hands of the state (Hopkins, 1970). In today's Russia, information war is understood not just as a strategic confrontation between two or more states but also as a tool to destabilize society and state and as a coercive tool that helps force the target country to make decisions that favour the attacking party (Derbin, 2017, quoted by Pynnöniemi, 2019, p. 216). It is also important to note that in the Russian context the 'information war' is all-encompassing – this is distinct from the Western definition of the phenomenon as something that is only used in limited situations. What is different to the Cold War-era Soviet propaganda is that present-day Russia tries not to sell itself as an idea or model for others to emulate. The aim is to undermine the notion of objective truth and reporting (Giles, 2016, p. 6).

In the discourse that I have separated from my data, information war means the 'strategic confrontation' between Russia and the West. In my conversation with the journalists it appears, first and foremost, as a battle between Russian and Western journalism. As demonstrated in the interview with Andrey Medvedev of Rossiâ 1 / VGTRK -channel:

> It's just that the American, British, Swedish journalism … the one (journalism) that once spoke about Vietnam War honestly, the one that spoke about Iraq war … well, if not dishonestly but at least the political emphasis was understandable – but the picture was complete … today there is no complete picture. Today there are no references to sources, today there is no way to know where they took it all. Today BBC can … the tragedy with the Boeing. Horrible tragedy, hundreds of people died. Literally in 2–3 hours, the bodies have not been taken away, and BBC says that this was done by pro-Russian militias.

These frameworks are also present in what Serguei Oushakine (2009) means by the 'patriotism of despair'. According to Oushakine, since the Soviet system lacked a developed network of civic institution or political responsibility, the collective practices of grief and discourses of bereavement gradually occupied a leading position in a kind of civic life. The patriotism of despair can also be rooted in the old idea of Russia as a reactive rather than active nation, as victim and a saviour (more about this in Kati Parppei, Chapter 2, this volume).

Media and Patriotic Education

Despite the importance of patriotism for the Kremlin and the patriotic education that remains embedded in the school system owing to a lack of other tangible models for civic education (see Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume), there is no clear approach to the concept in journalism. Even the term itself remains somewhat ambiguous and lacks precise academic definitions, unlike its sister term nationalism, which has inspired a lot of academic discussion. Some authors – like Berg (2010) above – see patriotism somewhat similarly to how Benedict Anderson (2006) saw nationalism in his classic work *Imagined Communities*: as a glue that keeps nations together.

The most common definition of the term revolves around the concept of 'love to the Motherland' or 'positive nationalism'. Sanina (2017, p. 22) writes that patriotism is a philosophical concept that

'reflects emotions of love for a particular place, i.e. a region or a country, and a readiness to support the community of people associated with that place'. Marlene Laruelle maintains (2009, p. 172) that contemporary Russia uses nationalism as a central element in the construction of social consensus. To her, patriotism as a self-evident topic in this exercise is there to 'attenuate political divisions, to negate potential social conflicts and to efface the multiplicity of cultural references by recentering discourse on the idea that nation is in danger and must be defended' (ibid., p. 155).

The state programmes of patriotic education communicate this need for consensus in many ways. The ongoing 2016–2020 programme, for instance, underlines the 'priority of societal interests above individuals and self-sacrifice'. It puts emphasis on citizens' accountability for the fate of the country and also calls for strengthening citizens' sense of participation in the great history and culture of Russia (Goode, 2016, p. 320; International Crisis Group, 2018; Pravitel′stvo Rossijskoj Federacii, 2015). Currently the programmes include three components: military, spiritual and civic, meaning, respectively: teaching historic battles and promoting readiness to defend the homeland; imbuing pupils with moral uprightness, desire for healthy lifestyles and respect for the environment; and respecting state and legal systems as well as history and cultures.

Work with the mass media is one of the five main concrete directions of the programmes. In the ongoing programme for 2016–2020, 'securing the informational dimension of the patriotic education of citizens' is defined as an exercise that takes place at the federal, regional and municipal levels and is aimed at creating circumstances for covering patriotic events and phenomena. This includes creating databases; analysing web sites and blogs; using new technologies to cover patriotic education in a modern way; promoting the development of patriotic TV programmes, print media and literature; and creating conditions for the people to get to know the work of journalists, writers, scientists and others who have worked in the field of patriotic education. The programme also requires the creation of media products that specialize in patriotic themes. The work plan of the programme includes several concrete

steps including radio programmes about military-patriotic themes and films about the history and traditions of Russian army and the history of the Great Patriotic War. The work done with the media is clearly aimed at young people: the plans are made in cooperation with the Center of Patriotic Education for Children and Youth. The emphasis of the media production is on military patriotism and in the heroes of Russian history; this emphasis runs all through the patriotic education programme for 2016–2020 (Pravitel′stvo Rossijskoj Federacii, 2015).

Reflections of patriotism on journalism and/or television have, however, not been researched widely. There is a general understanding among the public that the media plays a role in promoting patriotic education (Goode, 2016; see also Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume) and the programmes emphasize the role of journalism; however, as is the case with the patriotic education programmes in general, there is little information on their actual impact on media and/or citizens. Some scholars, such as L.S. Makarova (2010, pp. 889–892), think that patriotism should be promoted in journalistic education as something that promotes tolerance. Makarova bases her observations on a questionnaire conducted among journalism students in the University of Nizhegorod. The respondents all felt that it is the duty of a journalist to defend the national interests of Russia.[1] The idea of journalists playing a role in promoting patriotism is thus nothing new. In the 1930s elements were already being used in Soviet radio, even in children's programmes (Somov and Somova, 2016).

The Role of Television in Russia

Any government, even personalist autocracies, need the support of the people as the ultimate source of legitimacy. In the case of Russia, Soviet-era concepts of patriotism, nationalism and internationalism remain actively used and meaningful (Goode, 2016, p. 420). And the way to gain access to people is television. Peter Rollberg (2018, p. 247) calls Russian television the 'key element for maintaining political stability and social functionality'. He quotes Daniil Dondurej (2011), the editor-in-chief of Cinema

Art, as saying that television is an 'institution for unifying into one entity the people inhabiting a common territory. … [Television networks] are invisible secret services for the management of the country, the economy, human capital, and for guaranteeing national security' (Dondurej, 2011).

My assumption in this text follows Dondurej in that I see the ideas by the state necessarily being circulated in the thinking of journalists themselves. It is not just the institution but also the views of the individual journalists that set the tone for official patriotism. Institutions and powerful individuals not only exercise control over their members but also influence, shape and determine their 'attitudes, beliefs and very wants' (Barkho, 2011, p. 31; Lukes, 2005, p. 27). Subsequently, the power that is held by journalists in powerful journalistic institutions such as Russian mainstream news channels is exercised not only by the fact that the television is well resourced and promoted by the state but also by the individual position(s) of the journalists working for them.

In the case of Russian television, another useful point of view has to do with neo-authoritarian regimes that need a state-controlled media sphere to maintain domestic legitimacy. Putin needs his television to control the setting of public agenda and the articulation of official discourse, even though a limited amount of freedom is permitted in the ownership structures of the media (Meng and Rantanen, 2015; Tolz and Teper, 2018, p. 213). If patriotism is an official part of state policy, then is it not the duty of journalists working for state-owned and controlled television stations to promote it?

Despite the profound changes undergone in Russian television, it needs to be noted that it still has its roots in Soviet TV, a propaganda weapon for the state. The first real TV reportage was aired from Red Square in May 1956 and concentrated on the May festivities. From the very start of its existence, Soviet TV was part of the state machinery and subject to hard censorship. It was only the times of glasnost and perestroika that brought TV journalists the long-sought freedom. Perestroika, initiated by Mihail Gorbačev and continued officially up until the coup of August 1991, meant a change in Soviet policy that aimed at

bringing the Soviet economics, politics, ideologies and culture into harmony with basic human ideals and values. This meant a new press law, abandonment of censorship, political changes and liberating TV programmes. The dry, official news programme *Vremya* was complemented by new kinds of TV news broadcasts by talented young people. Direct uncensored translations became more widespread (Ûrovskij, 2002).

However, these changes led for their part to the gradual fall of the Soviet system. The freedom spread very quickly. Glasnost, introduced first as a policy from above, became a policy from below that demanded freedom not as an instrument of government policy but in its Enlightenment connotation of the spirit of critical inquiry (Skillen, 2017, p. 152). The last desperate try of Gorbachev to control the situation was sacking the head of Gosteleradio in late 1990 and replacing him with a more loyal person. It was, however, too late, and glasnost and perestroika gave room to nationalist movements and an urge for self-determination. This, combined with a major economic crisis caused by multiple factors from the inefficiency of state companies to environmental concerns about a number of industries and nuclear power stations, eventually led to the end of the Soviet Union (Beissinger, 2002, p. 385; De La Pedraja, 2019, p. 40; Marples, 2004, p. 97; Skillen, 2017).

How does Russian television look like today? To get there one has to look at the 1990s, an era that Daphne Skillen (2017, p. 56) depicts by quoting Vysotsky's lyrics: 'Yesterday they gave me freedom, what am I to do with it?' According to Skillen (ibid.), the media never becoming a real 'fourth estate' was largely caused by the media professionals themselves. The media, especially television, did not position itself as a true servant of the public. The years of the 1990s gave room to the rise of the oligarch television, meaning that people like Boris Berezovzkij and Vladimir Gusinskij acquired major ownership in the media. After this time, no significant TV channel in Russia has been owned by anyone who would not hold close ties to the Kremlin. Today some 90% of the Russian mass media is owned and controlled by the state. One can say that the television is a mix of two models: state-controlled and commercial. The latter provides entertainment content only.

The ownership structure via loyal oligarchs has made it possible for the government to control the media through just three media holdings (Smirnov, 2014, pp 93–136; Tolz and Teper, 2018, p. 214).

Television remains the most watched mass media, despite the growing popularity of the internet and social media platforms. According to the annual report on television, over 90% of Russians watch TV at least once a week; 70% do it every day. According to the rating agency Mediascope/TNS, in 2016, TV reached its peak of popularity ever over the years the ratings have been conducted (Federal′noe agenstvo po pečati i massovym kommuinikaciâm, 2017, p. 28). This was explained largely by the growth in the time spent watching TV. Interestingly enough, the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 witnessed a growth in the hours spent in front of the TV. This was mostly thanks to the oldest segments of population, those traditionally very loyal to television. Mediascope/TNS reports state that in 2016 Russian viewers over 55 years would spend 6 hours and 17 minutes watching television[2] (ibid, p. 29). When it comes to the popularity of the TV channels, the most watched channels are Channel 1 and Russia 1/VGTRK, or 'second channel'. Their viewership is around 37% each (Zakem et al., 20186).

How does television react to patriotism?

In a lengthy television debate on the eve of Victory Day 2018 on the public broadcaster OTR,[3] two Russian writers, Vladimir Eremenko and Ûri Polâkov, were debating patriotism. The programme was headlined as discussing 'quasi- and real patriotism' (OTR, 2018). The journalist leading the broadcast, Olga Arslanova, started by stating:

> What we have for sure seen during the last years – it is an outburst of patriotism. And we are here to find out what we mean by it.

The programme started with an opinion poll stating that 78% of Russians consider themselves patriots. The fact that those 17% of Russians who do not consider themselves patriots have

lower levels of education and are worse off materially was underlined. The same poll also asked about the ways patriotism should be expressed. For Russians, serving in the army was an important expression of patriotism, and so was non-willingness to leave Russia. Other definitions supported by people were 'support of the leadership of the country', 'active citizenship', 'charity and mutual help', 'participation in elections and meetings', 'support of domestic producers', 'participation in memory meetings', even 'support of Russian sportsmen'. The discussants of this programme seemed really worried about the 42% of Russians who were not able to express what patriotism meant for them. The contents of the programme demonstrated clearly one tendency in official Russian patriotism that comes frequently up in opinion polls as well (Levada-Center, 2019). The word appears often in the media and people are expected to think about it; however, the content of the term, let alone its practical reflections in everyday life, seems unclear.

The Research Data

The journalists interviewed for this chapter worked for, had worked for, or had an ongoing professional relationship with the mainstream television stations.[4] Four of them worked for Rossiâ 1/ VGTRK (Vserossijskaâ gosudarstvennaâ televizionnaâ i radioveŝatel′naâ kompaniâ), which is the second largest television channel in Russia. In fact, the viewership of the channel has on some occasions exceeded the viewership of the First Channel (Trunina, 2017). Rossiâ 1 / VGTRK is fully state-owned but it also airs commercials, demonstrating the particularity of the Russian system where the main TV networks are state-owned but the state could not maintain its position without private revenues (Meng and Rantanen, 2015, pp. 10–11; Tolz and Teper, 2018, p. 214).

Rossiâ 1 / VGTRK was established in 1990 as RTR, the channel that served only Russia in the Soviet Union. Today Rossiya 1 / VGTRK is a massive round-the-clock TV holding that has four

channels and a separate digital channel package. Famous journalists running talk shows at VGTRK include Sergei Brilev and Dimitri Kiselev. Two of the Rossiya 1 / VGTRK journalists, including Sergei Brilev, gave their consent to use their names and two remained anonymous. I have coded the anonymous interviewees using code M for male and F for female. F1 and M1 work for Rossiya 1 / VGTRK.

One interviewee (M2) had recently worked for the best-known Russian TV channel, First Channel (Pervyj kanal). Pervyj kanal is the successor of Soviet era 'Ostankino', which was first renamed in 1995 as ORT ('Obŝestvennoe Rossijskoe Televidenie') and in 2002, when Boris Berezovzkij lost control of the channel, as 'First Channel' (Medvedskaâ, 2017, p. 51).

The channel remains to this day the most watched in Russia, and it has been able to remain so despite the overall changes in the media consumption, and the numerous forecasts that have predicted a decline of television as a medium that brings the whole nation together (Gabowitsch, 2012, p. 214; Vartanova, 2012, p. 43).

Out of the eight interviewees, six were still actively working in television; two (M3 and F2) were older and currently working part time, mostly as journalism teachers or for print media, but they too had an insider's view of Russian television. M4 had a job at one of the big newspapers but was a frequent visitor of television talk shows especially on First Channel.

All the journalists I interviewed had clear, outspoken opinions about patriotism. There are no officially established connections between patriotic education programmes and journalists, but in practice some journalists exercise it. For instance, a retired TV journalist who ran a TV academy for schoolchildren told me how she took part in the Immortal Regiment in May 2018 by putting the pictures of her relatives, veterans of war, on the table of the room:

> I said that this is my grandfather and my uncle, we should say big thank you to them. I put the pictures by the remote control. … Why did I do this? I don't know. It flew onto me from above. An American would not do this. They would think I am crazy. We are different, for real we are different. We … sometimes I am even

> mad at us, Americans put their flag up, why don't us … but we are differently built. Patriotism is deep in us, it appears when needed. (Interview with F2, Moscow, May 2018).

In Table 5 below, I separate the three discursive frameworks of patriotism I analysed as persistent patterns within the interview data. The table below highlights the three discourses I separated from my interviews: intimate patriotism, military patriotism and infowar patriotism. The latter two are intertwined and carry similarities; however, journalists supporting military patriotism do not necessary find infowar patriotism useful, whereas intimate patriotism can carry elements of military patriotism. This means, for instance, the case of a journalist who is active in investigating the Second World War, including cooperating in groups that look for the remains of soldiers lost at war active in covering the events of Second World War, but at the same time is critical of the 'propagandistic patriotism' in media.

Each of the discursive frameworks was expressed in multiple ways during the conversations. Intimate patriotism discourse came up via journalists explaining their loyalty to the country, to people, to the environment and to other things related closely to people's everyday lives. Military patriotism drew from the official patriotic discourse as well as the state-level security concerns in its expressions, analogies used and definitions of problems. Infowar patriotism was clearest when talking to the two Rossiya 1 / VGTRK journalists who gave their consent to express their names. Andrej Medvedev of Rossiya 1 / VGTRK, for instance, was very critical about the shooting of the Malaysian plane and the Salisbury poisonings. Another journalist, interviewed anonymously, however, said that his patriotism means that he searches for truth, and the official narratives were even unpleasant to him:

> For many people I am not a patriot but almost a traitor. For me to be a patriot is to speak the truth. I think not speaking out the truth causes problems to ourselves. The clearest example is the fact that our authorities up to this day do not admit that our military is present in South-Western Ukraine. It is ridiculous to deny it. (Interview, M4, Moscow, May 2018).

Table 5: Discourses on patriotism by TV journalists in Moscow.

	Intimate patriotism	**Military patriotism**	**'Infowar' patriotism**
Origins of the discourse	Soviet concepts of patriotism	State definitions of patriotism	Kremlin[5]
Expressions	Taking care of the environment; respect for the heroes of war in concrete actions	External threat; heroic past, Second World War	Problems of the West: Skripal case; Malaysian plane; sanctions
Dichotomy patriots/ liberals	Unnecessary and artificial	'You cannot be liberal in such a huge country'	'We do not have patriotic liberals in this country'
Analogies	Soviet times; Russian mentality	History of Russia showing the way	Counterweight to the degeneration of the West
Definitions of problems	Passivity of the people, need to 'do something for your country'	External threat towards Russia	America and other countries trying to disturb Russia and strip it off its power
Under-standing of freedom of speech	Situation is bad but TV does what people want it to do; self-censorship prevails	There is no free media anywhere; self-censorship prevails	There is no free media in the West

Table by the author.

I also analysed the dichotomy between patriots and liberals[6] by asking the journalists whether such a dichotomy exists. In some interviews the dichotomy was seen as unnecessary, even detrimental; however, all the journalists did find this dichotomy something that exists in political discourse.

The single thing every discourse and interview had in common was the pessimistic understanding of freedom of speech. It was seen either as something that exists nowhere, or something that is now in decline in Russia, because people do not want the truth. And Western journalism is in decay as well.

Discourses on Patriotism

Intimate patriotism

All three patriotic discourses have their roots in the Soviet concepts of patriotism. The Soviet system implicitly involved patriotic orientation, as demonstrated as early as 1925 by the first People's Commissar of Education, Anatolij Lunačarskij, who wrote about the necessity of encouraging the citizens' 'revolutionary patriotism' and their pride in the Fatherland (Sanina, 2017, p. 34). During and after the Second World War the all-prevailing patriotic discourse was a necessary component to unifying the nation for the needed sacrifice, and this was complemented by an intensive exercise of building enemy images (ibid., pp. 69–70). This approach to patriotism remained relatively unchanged until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As the first programmes of patriotic education were introduced in Russia in 2001, the government emphasized the need to form 'socially significant values' such as the 'readiness to carry out civic duty and constitutional obligations to protect the interests of the homeland'. This did not make everyone happy. The Soviet bureaucratic approach was disliked by many, and some were disturbed by the attempt to 'governmentalize an intimate feeling' (Nikonova, 2010, pp. 354–355).

This interpretation of 'intimacy' in patriotism can be found in all my interviewees. How it was expressed varied. The clearest examples of it came during my first interview with M3 a long-term journalist, and who is to this day working at a newspaper but had a long career in media, including television, before. In the interview, he referred to the Soviet theory of the press as 'collective propagator, agitator and organizator'. According to him, the

task of 'organizator' was appreciated and taken seriously at the time – he remembered the times he worked as the editor-in-chief of a youth paper.

> We had a very positive attitude towards this. When I was the editor of a youth paper we organized many acts that were good and interesting and we aim at this now as well. (Interview, M3, Moscow, May 2018).

Beside his journalistic duties, M3 is involved in the searches for the bodies of those lost during the war. In addition to this, he participates in delivering medals to veterans who did not get them during wartime.

> This is not komsomol construction building a BAM … but writing notes [in Russian: *zametki*, a genre in Russian journalism] takes 10 to 15% of my time and the rest I spend on these things. Not everyone can afford this kind of work, first one must make a career. For me it is possible not to show up at the newsroom for three days, if I am not on duty. (Interview, ibid).

Intimate patriotism also meant underlining the special nature and character or Russians and Russianness, at the same time sometimes pointing at representatives of other countries[7] as being less generous. Interviewees gave examples of situations in which a Russian is helpful and unegoistic to others:

> I think we are disliked [by other countries] because we have this attitude towards money … God gave it, good took it. It's not that we are careless, but we have somewhat different values. (Interview, F2, Moscow, May 2018).

A female interviewee, an employee of Rossiya 1/ VGTRK, expressed her love for the Motherland via her criticism of it:

> I am very, very worried about the destiny of my homeland. I am a Russian person, I have a very sensitive attitude to Russian language, to the context. It all really hurts me, especially for the people. I don't want to cooperate with them … all this big amount

> of people supporting the authorities, they want to argue. I don't want to argue or reassure anybody about anything. We are grown ups. … What I can do is to show my own child that there is more to the world than this television and this big country of ours. (Interview, F1, Moscow, May 2018).

I interviewed two visible journalists, both from Rossiya 1/VGTRK.[8] Andrej Medvedev, a journalist from Rossiya 1/VGTRK, put it this way:

> I think that patriotism – it is concrete things. Love to the Motherland – it is not empty conversation, it is very … you can touch it with your bare hands. If you don't spit on the streets – you are a patriot. You do spit: you are disgusting, a fascist and an occupant. Unfortunately … in Russia civil society is very young and underdeveloped, we are not used to demanding something from the civil servants. And civil servants are not used to being accountable to citizens, they are not seen as hired managers like in Europe. So I think patriotism, including the one that journalist has, consists of trying to reassure people that this is how it works. This is the way it works everywhere in the world: the responsibility of the civil servant starts at the point where he is under control. (Interview, Moscow, June 2018).

Intimate patriotic discourse goes very close to what patriotism was seen as in the Soviet Union: as loyalty and love to much-suffered fatherland, and as a sense of belonging that is framed by trauma and suffering (Oushakine, 2009, p. 5). It is the duty of a citizen to be a patriot for the simple reason that the Motherland, surrounded by external enemies, needs nurture and care.

Military patriotism

Militaristic discourse is the most obvious of the discourses I separated in my materials. The origins of Soviet patriotism are militaristic by character. Stalin articulated in the early 1930s that the defence of the Fatherland is necessary to protect socialism (Sanina, 2017, p. 34). In today's patriotic discourses, victory in the Second World War remains a key element.

In addition to Second World War, this narrative appreciates Russia's historical struggles spanning from the tsarist, Soviet and post-Soviet eras, especially from the viewpoint of appreciating empire as a national achievement and underlining the comparisons between the present and imperial past (Nikonova, 2010, p. 353). Also, the patriotic education programmes, as depicted above, concentrate on the military aspects of patriotism. Their original aim was to raise the profile of the Russian army. The army has indeed gained popularity after its all-time low in the 1990s, but this could also be due to the reforms within the system (De La Pedraja, 2019).

> During the last three years there is also a clear tendency that some young men even leave their studies and want to go to army. Not because they have problems at the university. They come from good families. The reason is that they want to defend their close ones, their homeland. This is very good … I hear this from their mothers, they can be doing really well at the University but still want to go to the army! This is patriotism. (Interview, F2, Moscow, May 2018).

These things did come up with the interviews, especially with the two older – retired but still working – journalists. Both of them expressed military patriotism as something personally important, as from an intimate viewpoint: defending homeland is a duty and has many ramifications, and is a natural human feeling. What is noteworthy about the discourse is that it makes no claims about Russian journalism but concentrates on showing that there is no honest journalism in the West either: the days of 'good journalism' are over.

This thematic framework arose clearly from each of the interviews. I asked all the journalists whether they thought that 'Russia is at information war'. I gave all the interviewees a lot of room to define the terms and concepts; despite this freedom, the journalists would come up with either narratives that followed the Russian metanarratives or an apologetic explanation of why this works the way it does. By metanarrative I mean, following Gill (2011, p. 3), a 'body of discourse that serves as a vehicle of

communication between the regime and those living under it. The aim of a metanarrative is to simplify the prevailing ideology and serve as a tool for symbolic construction of the society, normalizing and stabilizing some concepts and excluding others.'

Military patriotism also strongly carries the narrative of the Second World War – a narrative generally very important for and in Russia today. The war is also used in order to explain many things, not least the shortcomings in today's world:

> I guess not everything is as great as everywhere in Europe … but kids, you did not have the kind of a war as we had. The war destroyed the Soviet Union totally. Out of 27 million [deceased] 18 were peaceful civilians. Nine million – war losses, and everything else – civilians. Soviet children – children – were taken to concentration camps. … By year 1945 the country was destroyed from Western border to Volga, nothing was left whole, nothing. How can you guys in the West, say, that our life is not as good as yours? What do you mean by that? You don't have our experience. We sent Gagarin to space in 1961, 16 years after the most horrible war. (Interview with Andrej Medvedev of Rossiya 1/VGTRK, June 2018).

Sergej Brilev, the best-known of my interviewees, used the 'military' description of patriotism. He did not find the term very easily describable, and thought that one expression of it is waving the flag (the interview was made during the Football World Championship in Moscow):

> SB: There's a military-political aspect of it and in that sense Russia, because of its long security-related history makes you look at things maybe slightly differently … in comparison with small countries. Because essentially, if you look at the attitudes of the population towards certain things, it's quite similar to have – or used to have – in America, Britain, France and China. Essentially, essentially the same logic. People question things more and more but you know. And there's this notion that is very important to me, about patriotism contributing to the well-being of the country. I find it essential, but also being a realist and knowing this country I can tell you that

> there are quite a lot of people in this country, maybe even majority, to whom well-being is secondary. People in this country are ready to sacrifice and to suffer for the sake of an important aim. In between brackets this is very important to something that people in the West fail to comprehend, why the anti-Russian sanctions are going nowhere. People are not impressed. In fact they are impressed but the reaction is … totally different to what the decision-makers in Washington and Brussels expected.
>
> SN: And you think this is something that … this could be called patriotism?
>
> SB: Mmmm … you may call it patriotism. This is how this country's mentality has worked since at least 1237, when the country was invaded by the Mongol Tatars. So it's been eight centuries. (Interview, Moscow, June 2018).

Both Brilev and Medvedev of Rossiya 1/VGTRK were worried of the fact that young people did not know the history the way they 'should'.

> What preoccupies me in fact is that what I see is the youth – I am already, I am 45 years old so I am starting to say things about the youth – the youth knows history not as it should and sometimes there are funny paradoxes when patriotism is being promoted and people do wave flags but they don't really talk to the youth and they don't understand the basic history lessons. (Interview with Sergej Brilev, Moscow, June 2018).

Military patriotism, of all the discourses, has most obvious roots in the state-led patriotism exercises. The basic assumptions are that Russia is surrounded by external enemies and it is the duty of citizens to know the bloody history of Russia and to be prepared for the worst, the way it always has been for the country.

Infowar patriotism

As described earlier in this chapter, Russian definitions of information war led to a Russian security strategy where non-military

measures are combined with military ones in order to neutralize a potential threat to the national interests (Pynnöniemi, 2016, p. 221). The measures vary from situation to situation, but one tactic used is using certain pre-prepared narratives that are spread in the media.

For instance, the European Union External Action Service-backed EU vs Disinfo has separated several clear narratives used by Russian mainstream media to undermine the 'West' in particular (EU vs Disinfo, 2019). The narrative, where the West is 'decaying', is not a new one but has been prevalent for centuries. Often the strategy is not to spread lies but repackage information selectively in order to produce not false but heavily slanted news (Lupion, 2018, pp. 352–353). Familiar narratives used to undermine the 'West' have been the erosion of moral values, the deliberate destruction of history, and constant strikes, protests, terrorism and the problematic influx of refugees and migrants (EU vs Disinfo, 2019; Mölder and Sazonov, 2018, p. 322).

Parts of these narratives were easily recognized in my interviews. Some of them came in a milder form. Sergej Brilev of Rossiya 1/VGTRK, for instance, reminded that Russia is still a liberal democracy, although it started building democracy later than Europe:

> [This country] is less a liberal democracy compared to Western Europe, but still so much more a democracy compared to any country that lies to its South or to its East. It's a democracy. Essentially it's a democracy. People vote. People choose. This country has achieved something for the last twenty-five years that took Europe 300 years to achieve. In comparison with the West – yes, I would like to see this and this and this. In Russian reality, you have to be patient sometimes. It will change. (Interview, ibid, June 2018).

Brilev also mentioned the relatively late decriminalization of homosexuality in the West. Later on, when I asked concrete questions about information warfare, he mentioned that infowar has been going on for a long time – basically deriving from anti-communist propaganda spread in the West during the Cold War, up until the war in Georgia. Brilev felt that there have been

misunderstandings: that not all the bad things said were there on purpose; he also felt that somehow the spread of useless stereotypes has been let out of hands.

Certain things belong quite automatically to the category of 'information warfare'. For instance, the issue of economic sanctions against Russia is officially stated and interpreted as being a good thing for Russia. Some interviewees completely agreed with this, such as the female interviewee no longer full time on TV:

> These sanctions that are now put upon as in big quantities … they are in the end a plus. We were forced to actively develop industrial sector … we don't like to be maddened. This time it was done fundamentally. So people, even those that used to be indifferent … it is not a coincidence that this year so many people came to the immortal regiment. (Interview, F2, Moscow, May 2018).

My only interviewee from the First Channel was clearly within the machinery of information warfare – but he did not feel like it. He had been covering US presidential elections. To him, sympathetic coverage of Trump was natural, because he felt somewhat that the (Russian) state sympathized with Trump.

> Interviewee: There was no official setting, but I somehow felt in the situation that our state is sympathetic to Trump.
>
> SN: Yes?
>
> I: Yes, because Hillary is associated with war – war in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Consequently, Hillary is associated with the oil click, that exchanges oil to blood, blood to oil and so on.
>
> SN: And you think, that you felt that somehow you know how to cover, in order to …?
>
> I: There was no official setting, but there was a game of sorts. And Trump is totally unpredictable, totally different to the rest of the Washington establishment. So it was fun, my attitude to work was that it was not work but some kind of a game. If one takes it all seriously, one can lose one's mind. (Interview, M2, Moscow, June 2018).

This conversation was interesting, since the journalist saw and analysed the Russian-indulged narratives around US elections as a 'game' of sorts. He did not feel like being under pressure, or part of some kind of a major information machine; he rather felt that he took his work lightly and played a game. Later it was established that the attack against Hillary Clinton was well-planned and followed a consistent narrative (see e.g. Helmus et al., 2018; Snyder, 2018, pp. 231–279).

Only one of my interviewees was clearly and outspokenly critical of the practices of infowar. He asked to remain anonymous when criticizing the Russian media. He felt that there was no balanced journalism in Russia.

> As a rule here, if the journalist criticizes Putin, he will in all support Ukraine and in all the ways he will condemn the Russian – Donetsk side. If the person thinks he is patriot or Russia, he will blame Kyiv about all the sins. … He will be sure that Malaysian plane was shot by a Ukrainian provocation and so and so forth. … Remarkable part of journalists went to propaganda. I know very few media outlets and not many concrete journalists that remain worth the term 'journalists'. … The only very mild comfort – maybe a comfort – is that the standards have changed, the Western journalism has gone down as well. (Interview, M4, Moscow, May 2018).

This discourse was commonplace; it came up in four of my eight interviews.

> I don't think there is freedom of speech or objective journalism anywhere. Do you think Yle is free? BBC? The same talking heads. Yle programs are the most boring I have heard. Journalist cannot be free as long as he gets money. He will always be in charge for that who gives the cash. The only way to be 'independent' would be to make the money some other way. (Interview, M1, Rossiya 1/VGTRK, Moscow, September 2018).

The journalist underlined the impossibility of nonpartisan journalism.

> Sometimes my friends blame me for serving the state interests in my work at a state-owned TV. That feels odd. We all serve some interests. (Interview, ibid).

Journalists were also eager to explain the problems in Russian journalism by the passivity of Russian people and the fact that nobody really wants democracy or freedom of speech:

> We live like on a volcano. And despite that, the nostalgy to Soviet Union is very strong … Old films are being shown. They calm people down, calm because people want to go back, to return to the past simply because they don't want to take responsibility of their own lives. … People don't want any liberal democracy, they don't want it. Absolutely, they flee to all four directions. Most difficult part is the fight with the mentality. It's like in a film by Tarkovski: when a person sits in a dirty puddle and another comes and says 'come on, get up, get out of there'. And the other person replies: 'But this is where I live!' (Interview, F1, Rossiya 1/VGTRK, May 2018).

Conclusions

Serguei Alex Oushakine (2009) wrote in his thought-provoking book about patriotism of despair: 'The patriotism of despair, as I call it, emerged as an emotionally charged set of symbolic practices called upon to mediate relations among individuals, nation and state and thus to provide communities of loss with socially meaningful subject positions.' In other words, the discourse of war, of extreme loss and trauma combined with a story of heroic victory, is a crucial component of Russian patriotism up to this day and this is evident also when talking to journalists about their understandings of patriotism. The journalists feel that the much-suffered Motherland deserves a good treatment, and it is a duty of a citizen to do things for Russia. This is, however, not the full story; journalists give different meanings and interpretations to the concept.

Russian patriotism is a state ideology, and the state-centred military patriotism does have its ramifications in the minds and

activities of Russian TV journalists. Again, however, the official discourse is not accepted without criticism. Some journalists interviewed even found it awkward. Journalists also admit that the quality of mainstream Russian television journalism has gone down, although they underlined that this is the case everywhere.

Information security is high on the state agenda, listed among the cornerstones of preserving national security and thus in defending national interests (Kari, 2016, pp. 71–72). It is unlikely that the tendency to control television and to impose state-led patriotism upon TV journalists will cease anytime soon, despite the apparent inefficiency of patriotic education programmes and other top-down initiatives. The official narrative, where Russia is seen as a threatened superpower and where certain discourses are being constantly repeated to reinforce this system, is accepted and used, especially by prominent figures on television. Narratives about historical injustices do appear regularly and the official way of celebrating war is most often taken at face value.

Using patriotism as a means of (government) legitimation is not without risks. As argued by Goode (2016, p. 421), since patriotism includes both Soviet-era associations and contemporary ideals, it gives its users an opportunity to interpret and reinterpret it in many ways. According to Goode, the concept remains somewhat autonomous of regime and may as well be used to criticize or support the Kremlin (ibid.). Whether citizens' everyday understanding matches official doctrine really is a survival question for the regime. This was also seen in my materials: despite the clear separate discourses on patriotism that included elements of the doctrine, the journalists had their own ways of making sense of the concept.

Notes

[1] This questionnaire was done relatively recently, some two years after the war in South Ossetia and the Munich security conference, so it is likely that the attitudes of young people have been affected by these developments.

[2] The statistics do not mention the very widespread practice in Russia of having the television open in the room all the time. It is quite

unlikely that people actually sit watching the television for over six hours a day.

[3] 'Obŝestvennoe televidenie Rossii' ('OTR') is a public service broadcaster that started in 2013 after an initiative of President Medvedyev. For details, see e.g. https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Общественное_телевидение_России

[4] It needs to be noted that it was not easy to find interviewees since, officially, the journalists at VGTRK had no permission to talk to outsiders. Thus, turning to official structures such as the management of the channels was not helpful in finding interviewees.

[5] The Kremlin runs a system of weekly editorial meetings for the editors-in-chief of all main outlets, where they are given the topics and angles (Kizirov, 2017).

[6] This dichotomy comes often up, for instance, when speaking of 'Western liberalism' and patriotism and 'traditional values' as its counterweight. I was interested in the way journalists understood this dichotomy. More about this, see Il′ina, Chepkina and Kablukov (2017, p. 77).

[7] In this work I am not elaborating on the situations when my own nationality came up; however, it did and many times my interviewees underlined the special relationship between Russia and Finland. It even made me wonder whether my nationality had some effect on the course of the interviews.

[8] Out of the eight interviews, only three hoped to remain completely anonymous, two of them working for VGTRK and one for First Channel. Andrei Medvedev's interview was given to me via an official request sent to the VGTRK leadership.

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PART III

Elements of Militarization

Introduction to Part III

The third part of this volume takes up the issue of militarization in contemporary Russia. This is one of the contested concepts that carries with it more negative than positive connotations. For example, according to Michael Mann, militarism is 'a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity' (cited in Mabee and Vucetic, 2018, p. 98). Lorraine Dowler (2012, p. 491) makes a distinction between the process of militarization as a form of mobilization for conflict and militarism that refers to the attitudes of a society about military effectiveness. A similar distinction has been made earlier by Patrick M. Regan (1994, p. 40), who has argued that militarization is a 'process through which society is increasingly organized around the preparation for war'. Successful militarization depends on the promulgation of enemy images and societal militarization. Thus, militarization creates a 'self-amplifying feedback relationship', whereby 'the more militarized a society, the greater is the extent to which the perception of a threat will be maintained in the mass media'. If the external danger lessens, 'an increase in the manipulation of the perception of a threat' by the elite will occur (ibid., p. 40). However, the weakness of these theories, argues the author, is that 'they provide no analytical tools to distinguish between threats that are real and those that are only imagined – between necessary defensive security preparations and aggressive militarism. Such criteria seem to

be indispensable for an assessment of enmity in the international context' (ibid., p. 41).

The historical origins of the concept of militarism can be traced back to mid-19th-century France, where it was used in reference to the regime of Napoleon III (Golts, 2018, p. 294). In the context of the Western liberal tradition, militarism came to denote the 'domination of the military over the civilian' sphere (Skjelsbaek, 1979, p. 214) and a type of state 'where everything is organized to prepare for war with other countries' (Golts, 2018, p. 294). The concept of militarism has been given a normative meaning, especially during the Cold War. In Marxist scholarship, militarism was a synonym of the bourgeois state and its objectives of world domination. Accordingly, 'socialist militarism' was treated as a contradiction in terms (Skjelsbaek, 1979, p. 217). Such a categorical position was later refuted (see e.g. Albrecht, 1980). With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the engagement of the military in political battles was seen as one of the dangers possibly facing Russia (Lepingwell, 1992, p. 571). Such a development had been witnessed in the early 1950s, when the Soviet military leadership after the death of Stalin became involved in the post-Stalin political struggle (Garthoff, 1958, pp. 18–32). Indeed, as William E. Odom (1998, pp. 353–354) suggests, as late as November 1991 Gorbachev may have entertained an idea of the military taking power and installing a new government. What did take place instead was the looting of the Soviet armed forces for the personal benefit of insiders (ibid., p. 375). This, among other factors, led to the sharp decrease of the image of the armed forces among the population.

The multiple attempts at military modernization (Forsström, 2019; Golts, 2018; Renz, 2018) were primarily aimed at enhancing the fighting power of the Russian armed forces. Yet, this task entails the rebranding of the military to make it more attractive as an option among young people. This may explain the shift in the focus of military-patriotic education. As noted by Goode (2018, p. 265; see also Sperling 2009), funding for traditional propaganda has declined steadily, whereas 'mobilisational and competitive activities have increased nearly four-fold'. This process culminated

in October 2015 in the establishment of the 'All-Russia National Military Patriotic Social Movement Association Young Army' by the minister of defence, Sergei Shoigu.

The purpose of our investigation is not to establish a certain 'level' of militarization in Russian society but rather to explore it as a discursive process that takes different forms. Chapter 8 by Arseniy Svynarenko will analyse the recent survey results that show the growing trust in the Russian armed forces. This chapter will discuss the meaning of these results and provide an overview of the newly organized military-political training among the conscripts and military personnel. It is argued that, with the reorganization of the military-political training, the authorities aim to further enhance a positive image of the armed forces, and, seemingly most important, to consolidate the troops' moral and political views as well as willingness to fight. Jonna Alava's Chapter 9 on youth militarization provides an overview of the re-emergence of military-patriotic education in Russia, focusing in particular on the legitimation of Ûnarmiâ in the military science literature, official documents and the media. In Chapter 10 on cultural productions inspired by the disaster of the submarine *Kursk*, Elina Kahla discusses the topic of dying on duty, that is, the apologetics of the seamen's deaths. In the commemorative album by Hegumen Mitrofan, the seamen's deaths are represented as symbolic purgatory sacrifices on behalf of the whole nation that had faced abyss and anomy as a result of the trauma of the 1990s. In Mitrofan's military-theological, partially mystical apologetics, only blood sacrifices opened the eyes of society and contributed to gradual improvements, including religious revival and the collaboration of the church with the army and navy.

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CHAPTER 8

Upgrading the Image of the Russian Armed Forces

A Task Set for Military-Political Training

Arseniy Svynarenko[1]

Abstract

The demographic trends and general scepticism among the youth towards the armed forces have created a strong impetus for the authorities to make military service more attractive to young Russian men, improve the effectiveness of military training, and in general improve the image of the army among young people. The survey results show growing trust towards the armed forces in Russia. This chapter will discuss the meaning of these results and provide an overview of the newly organized military-political training among the conscripts and military personnel. It is argued that, with the reorganization of military-political training, the authorities aim to further enhance a positive image of the armed forces, and, seemingly most important, consolidate the troops' moral and political views as well as willingness to fight.

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Introduction

Over the past decade the Russian armed forces have undergone a transformation that aimed at improving its fighting power. In retrospect, most analysts praise the latest military reform as a success, albeit an incomplete one (Arbatov and Dvorkin, 2011; Forsström, 2019; Mikkola, 2014; Westerlund and Oxenstierna, 2019). Given the general trends of war fighting and Russia's demographic situation, the improvement of the manning system has been one of the priorities. For years, the Russian armed forces have referred in their plans to the official and symbolic target figure of one million troops under arms. It has been estimated that, in order to reach that level, the military needs to draft around 300,000 men annually (Stratfor, 2012). Taking a quick look at the demographic trends shows that there are challenges ahead in this area.

On the basis of the size of the cohort of 18- to 27-year-olds and assuming that, by the age of 27, around 35% of the male population will eventually have completed their conscription service (Svynarenko, 2016) it is possible to make an estimation of the future size of the conscript army (Figure 8).

In 2018, some 15% of all conscripts were 18 years-old, 27% were 19 years old and 58% aged between 20 and 27 years old (Ministerstvo oborony Rossijskoj Federacii, 2019b). The most typical conscript in Russia is a 20-year-old man from a small town or rural area, who studies at a vocational school or has recently completed it. Although the demographic trend for the general population is in decline, the size of the most important recruitment resource of 20- to 24-year-olds is likely to grow between 2020 and 2035 (owing to a moderate fertility increase starting from 2000). By 2035, the size of this cohort will recover to almost the same numbers as in 2014. According to a UN prognosis based on medium fertility, there will be 4,382,000 young men aged 20–24 in 2035, compared to 4,475,000 young men in 2014. The main decline will be in the category of military reserves. During the same time period, the number of 30- to 34-year-olds will decline by almost 50% – the

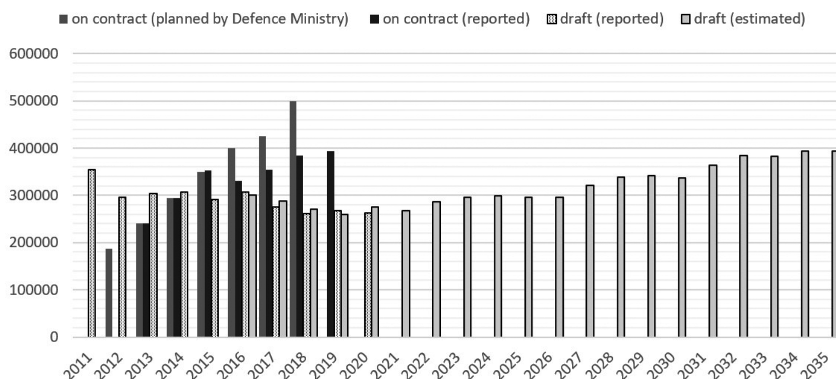

Figure 8: Reported number of young people drafted during the years 2011–2014 compared to the number of servicemen on contract and the forecast until 2035 of the number of young men who most likely will be drafted.

Planned number of servicemen on contract until 2017. Estimated number of conscripts until 2035 – estimate is based on estimated number of young men of conscription age.

Sources: Ministerstvo oborony Rossijskoj Federacii (2019a) and United Nations (2019). Figure by the author.

cohort of children born in the late Soviet years who were 25–30 in 2015 will remain the biggest cohort through the years composing the core of army reserves in 2035 (Svynarenko, 2016, pp. 28–33).

Between 2015 and 2019, the number of young people who joined the compulsory military service dropped from almost 300,000 to around 259,000. If, by 2024, there are no significant changes in legislation and the political situation in Russia, the number of young people drafted will recover to 298,000 (the level of 2014–2015) and will continue to grow. However, in 2014, the Defence Ministry reported that only 73% of conscripts were fit for military service, while some 20% received deferrals. Any significant fluctuations in the numbers of future conscripts are very unlikely. In the past two decades there was no explosive fertility growth or specific events that could radically reduce the number of children or young people (such as wars or economic crises; even the COVID-19 pandemic is characterized by a low mortality among children and youth). The changes in legal regulation and militarist

propaganda have only limited potential to increase the size of the conscript army. During the past three decades the highest number of 20- to 24-year-olds was in 2005–2010 (in 2010, as many as 549,400 young men were drafted for compulsory service) and the Russian armed forces were unprepared for this rapid increase in young men enrolled for military service. This partially contributed to the increased level of violence and accidents in the army. These themes dominated the public discourse about conscription and contributed to the growing unwillingness to serve in the army (Svynarenko, 2016, p. 78).

Furthermore, as shown in previous chapters, young people remain sceptical of the official patriotic discourse (see Lassila, Chapter 5, and Mitikka and Zavadskaya, Chapter 6, this volume). A survey conducted on soldiers' and officers' attitudes in 2010–2011 demonstrated that in 83 out of 100 cases servicemen are not satisfied with their army service (Surkova, 2012). Also, the annual report of the Soldier's Mothers organization identifies a list of problems affecting Russian army servicemen, including: high mortality in military conflicts, torture and cruelty, persecution of servicemen seeking to protect their rights (threats, psychological and physical pressure, and violence), failure to provide timely and adequate qualified medical assistance, and, finally, high levels of corruption (Soldatskie materi Sankt-Peterburga, 2014).

The current demographic trends and general scepticism among the youth towards the armed forces have created a strong impetus for the authorities to make military service more attractive to young Russian men, improve the effectiveness of military training, and in general improve the image of the army among young people. The prioritized tasks include an increase in payment for the military personnel and improvement of conditions for conscripts and professional soldiers alike. Although salary rise may serve as an important factor for a person to choose a military career or to engage in military conflicts (e.g. as a part of private military company), the Russian authorities also strive to change the overall political outlook and motivational sentiments among the youth (see Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume). The reorganization of the military-political training in the armed forces further

aims to improve the prestige of military service in society and to ensure political loyalty of the military personnel. How these two objectives can be met in the current political constellation is another matter.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. The next section takes a closer look at the survey data describing trust towards the armed forces. The purpose is to pinpoint major changes (e.g. growing support for the military service) and possible factors influencing these trends. An analysis of these trends and the previous research (e.g. Mitikka and Zavadskaya, Chapter 6, this volume) highlights that a higher level of trust towards the armed forces has not translated into willingness to make personal sacrifices in the case of conflict. In fact, militaristic patriotism is challenged by other versions of patriotism, especially among the groups that the Russian armed forces are most interested in. Therefore, it seems logical to suggest that the recent invigoration of military-political training in the armed forces seeks especially to enhance troops' willingness to fight. The second section of this chapter provides an overview of the recent changes introduced in pre-draft training and military-political training. The concluding section will discuss some possible directions of further research on this topic.

Trust in the Russian Armed Forces Is Growing

Currently, the armed forces is the most trusted institution in Russia, even before the president (Levada-Center 2020b). Public opinion polls show a longer-term positive trend in the way in which the army is perceived by society (Figure 9). Referring to the situation in the early 2000s, the director of the Levada-Center, Lev Gudkov, argued that the positive perception of the army indicates that 'the army is not regarded as an effective and efficient institution, but an embodiment of the most important national symbols, the key values for mass consciousness, and the reference point of mass identity' (cited in Golts, 2012, p. 217). Interestingly, it is not so much young people but more the older generations who are most receptive to this propaganda (Isakova, 2006).

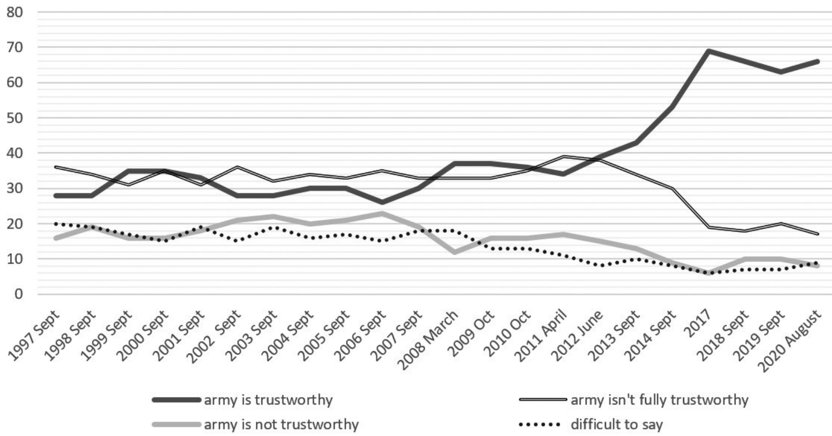

Figure 9: Distribution of answers to the question 'To what degree army is trustworthy?' between 1997 and 2020.

Source: Levada-Center (2015, 2018, 2019a, 2020a). Figure by the author.

Public trust towards the army fluctuates greatly depending on public perceptions of the processes in the army and on external factors, such as the perceived role of the Russian military in domestic or international conflicts (Figure 9). The poll taken in September 2006 after the Andrej Syčev hazing case showed worsened attitudes towards the army (26% of respondents supported the statement that the army was trustworthy, while another 35% said that army was not fully trustworthy). The 2008 poll was carried out in March, before the August military intervention in Georgia (Levada-Center, 2015). Shortly before and during the Russian military campaigns against Georgia and Ukraine, public attitudes towards the army improved considerably positive coverage of the Russian military campaign in Syria also contributed to the growth of trust in the armed forces, which skyrocketed, reaching a historical maximum of 69% in 2017.

Since late 2013, the proportion of the population that does *not* trust the army has started to decline. It is also noticeable that the proportion of those who are 'undecided' about the issue has likewise declined since 2008. These changes can be traced back both to the actualization of an alleged 'external threat' during the 2008 war in Georgia and the recent conflict with Ukraine, and to the longer-term impact of several soft power tools, such as

the positive representation of the armed forces in a series of new Russian films, and the patriotic education of young people, broad media coverage of the military drills, and the 'New Look' reform in the armed forces (which also includes a salary increase for military personnel), which gradually neutralize the negative perceptions by young people towards the armed forces in general, and military service in particular.

The widely shared perception of the systemic corruption in the armed forces can be regarded as a factor that has a negative overall effect on young people's trust towards the army. However, this aspect has not been thoroughly studied in opinion polls conducted in Russia. Sociological studies pay little attention to the theme of corruption during conscription, focusing instead on violence in the army and the issue of trust.

Attitudes towards military service changed considerably after 2014. According to polls conducted in July 2000, only 24% of respondents regarded army service as a duty to be paid to the state. In 2019, the number of respondents supporting statement that 'every real man should undergo military service' reached 60% – this is a 20% increase in five years (Figure 10). Simultaneously,

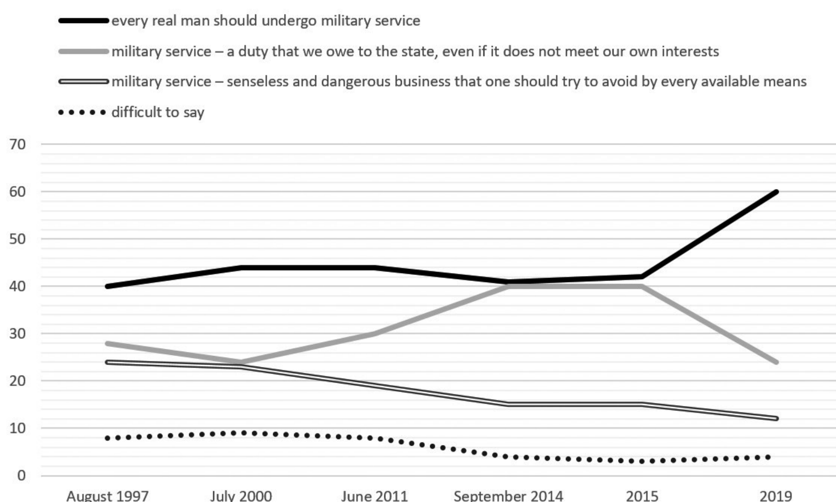

Figure 10: Distribution of answers to the question 'What is your attitude towards military service?' between 1997 and 2019.

Source: Levada-Center (2014, 2019b). Figure by the author.

the proportion of those supporting avoidance of military service by every available means has consistently declined.

A similar tendency is evident when the opinion poll results are organized according to age groups. In 2014, only one in four young respondents aged 18–24 agreed that every real man should serve in the army and in 2019 every other young respondent shared this opinion, while in 2014 42% of this age group said that it is one's duty to serve even if it does not meet one's own interests. Perhaps some young people redefined their understanding of 'own interest' but only 23% of them shared the same opinion in 2019. Interestingly, the change in the attitudes towards the army is less dramatic among 25- to 39-year-olds, who were less certain regarding this point, most likely because most of them were over the age of conscription and have families and jobs. Only one third agreed that they could give up their own interests for military service (33.7% in 2014 and 27.4% in 2019). The oldest generation consisted predominantly of those who were born after the Second World War, and they were the most supportive of the army (Table 6).

The location of respondents reveals interesting differences between regions (Table 7). The Moscow residents attached less importance to military service as an element of masculine identity in 2014 (26% said that 'Every real man should undergo military service'). Instead, for them, military service was perceived as an obligation (46% agreed with the statement 'military service – a duty that we owe to the state, even if it does not meet our own interests'). On the other hand, in the same year, residents of small towns viewed the army as an element of socialization into the masculine culture (47% of respondents in towns with less than 100,000 residents agreed that 'Every real man should undergo military service') and a duty served on behalf of the nation.

Attitudes towards military service also vary across social classes. Representatives of the lower social classes were more likely to perceive military service as an important element for building masculinity (48% of respondents in the 'poor' category agreed that 'Every real man should undergo military service'). In fact, income level and perceived wealth were in direct correlation with negative attitudes towards military service. Thirty-three per cent of rich

Table 6: Distribution of answers to the question 'What is your attitude towards military service?' Answers by age group.

	18- to 24-year-olds		**25- to 39-year-olds**		**40- to 54-year-olds**		**55 and older**	
	2014	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**
Every real man should undergo military service	27.7	49.7	43.1	52.4	40.4	61.7	44.6	67.9
Military service – a duty that we owe to the state, even if it does not meet our own interests	41.9	23	33.7	27.4	39.6	23.3	47	21.9
Military service – senseless and dangerous business that one should try to avoid by every available means	26.6	19.4	18.9	16	16	10.9	5	6.6
Difficult to say	3.9	7.9	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	3.5	3.6

Source: Levada-Center (2015, 2019c). Table by the author.

Table 7: Attitudes towards military service. Distribution of answers for Moscow, other towns and village residents.

	Moscow		**500,000+ residents**		**100,000–500,000**		**Less than 100,000**		**Villages**	
	2014	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**
Every real man should undergo military service	26.1	49.7	40.1	54.6	40.4	56.9	47.2	66.6	40.1	65.7
Military service – a duty that we owe to the state, even if it does not meet our own interests	46.3	19.5	35.8	26.9	42.9	24.2	41.5	23.6	40.3	23
Military service – senseless and dangerous business that one should try to avoid by every available means	22.1	27.6	18.9	13	12.2	12.5	8.9	5.7	16.3	9.4
Difficult to say	5.4	3.1	5.2	5.5	4.5	6.5	2.3	4.2	3.4	1.9

Source: Levada-Center (2015, 2019c). Table by the author.

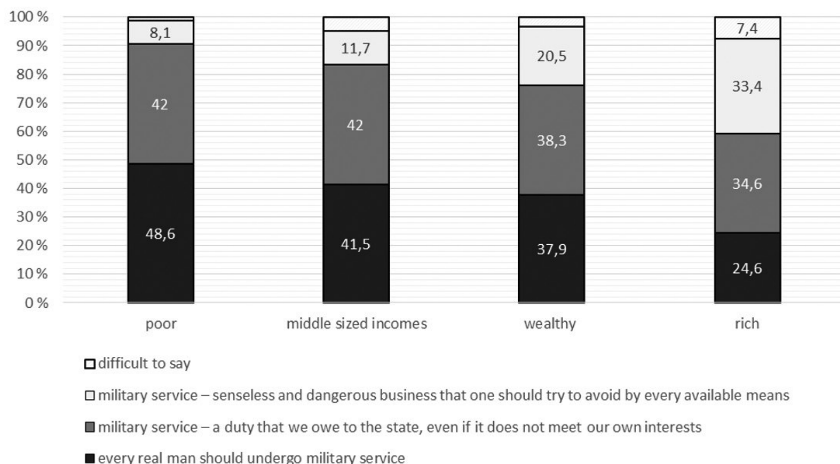

Figure 11: Attitudes towards military service. Distribution of answers for respondents in four income categories: poor, respondents with middle-sized incomes, wealthy, rich.

Source: Levada-Center (2015). Figure by the author.

respondents considered military service to be senseless, and hence something to be avoided. For the rest of the population, including those who were most likely to belong to the (*wealthy*) middle and upper-middle classes, military service was both a duty and a part of the masculine identity (Figure 11). A similar tendency was present in the 2019 respondents from low- and middle-income categories, who were more likely to bind the military service with the masculine identity; 63% shared the opinion that 'every real man should undergo military service' (Levada-Center, 2019c).

The general consensus among Russian respondents corresponds with the changes implemented during the military reform. Most young people support the idea that both paid professional soldiers and conscripts should serve in the army. However, older generations (55 years or older) are clearly in favour of the mixed system, whereas among the younger generation's support for an army consisting of only contract soldiers is significantly higher (Table 8). Between 2014 and 2019, some significant changes are evident: the support for a conscript army has increased across all generations, while support for the mixed military service (current system with both conscript and professional army) has declined.

Table 8: Distribution of answers to the question 'In your opinion who should serve in the army?' Comparisons across age groups.

	18–24		25–39		40–54		55 and older	
	2014	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**	**2014**	**2019**
Only conscripts according to conscription law	6.9	12.1	5.9	17.5	5.4	16.2	10.8	17.4
Only contracted soldiers who serve for money	41.8	47.3	34.3	33.4	22.6	30.4	19.4	24.3
Both conscripts and contracted soldiers	46.2	38.2	55.2	46.2	65.7	52.1	66.4	52.1
Difficult to say	5.1	2.4	4.6	2.7	6.2	1.3	3.5	5.8

Source: Levada-Center (2015, 2019c). Table by the author.

Age, place of residence, income level and level of attained education are all factors that influence respondents' trust towards the armed forces. A cross-examination of opinion polls also reveals that the more positive people are in their evaluations of President Putin, the more positive they are about the army in general and military service in particular (see also FOM, 2014). It can be argued that the perception of military service is formed largely through the mass media and is associated with the outcomes of reforms and other actions in relation to the army conducted under President Putin's leadership. Similar finding is made by Mitikka and Zavadskaya (see Chapter 6, this volume), who show that preferences for a strong political leader positively correlate with patriotism. Interestingly, those respondents who have direct contact with the army (e.g. they have relatives serving in the armed

forces) generally maintain a neutral opinion about the army, but those who have no contacts are confident that the army's image is a positive one (FOM, 2011).

What is more, many young people in the provincial towns see military service as a possibility to advance in society and they are more in favour of a longer duration of conscription service.[2] However, when they have actually been enlisted as conscripts, and possibly later as contract soldiers, positive expectations often go unrealized. All in all, a majority of Russians are in favour of conscription, and the number of general draft supporters increased from 31% in 2005 to 58% in 2017. Furthermore, a number of Russians who would choose to avoid the draft of a family member decreased from 39% in 2005 to 23% in 2017 (Levada-Center, 2017).

The relatively high trust towards the armed forces as an institution and increasingly positive, albeit not uncontroversial, image of the conscription among the general public are factors that the authorities can use as a resource in recruitment. However, as Mitikka and Zavadskaya show in Chapter 6, while trust in the army has increased, this has not automatically translated into a willingness to fight. In other words, while the trust towards the armed forces has grown quite steadily, the desire to fight is prone to fluctuate depending on the political trends. Russian sociologist Lev Gudkov (2019) has also drawn attention to the inherently ambiguous attitudes towards the armed forces and military service in Russia. As separate individuals, Russians are prone to avoid military service, he says, while as 'the people of Russia', a faceless collective, they tend to approve the Kremlin involvement in the Syrian conflict or in Donbass. This does not entail, Gudkov adds, that people would personally want to get involved in those conflicts or to pay the costs of Kremlin's military interventions. Comparing the current situation to that of the Soviet era, Gudkov observes that, in fact, discussion about the costs of war for society have become a taboo, and instead the war 'is turned into a sacred symbol of the greatness of the Russian state, not subject to doubt and analysis' (ibid.; see also Kolesnikov, 2016).

In light of these observations, we may formulate a hypothesis for further research. Accordingly, it seems logical that the Russian armed forces are currently facilitating military-political training among the conscripts and military personnel. In this way, the military may capitalize on the growing trust towards the army by further consolidating a positive image of the armed forces, and, seemingly most important, by creating social and discursive practices that will enhance and consolidate moral and political views as well as willingness to fight. To ascertain whether the reorganization of the military-political work is primarily oriented towards the latter task would require different types of research material (e.g. interviews) that is not available at the moment. The next section provides an overview of the officially stated goals for military-political training and can be used as a background of the further, more detailed, research on this topic. The section starts with a short description of the pre-draft training that forms an important part of the recruitment of the young people into the armed forces.

Reorganization of Military-Political Training in the Russian Armed Forces

The development of pre-draft training

Taking into account current demographic trends in Russia, that is, expected small cohorts of young men of draft age, the Russian authorities seek to influence a number of other factors including: effectiveness of draft, the reward system, population's health, and motivation to serve in the military. This section will discuss changes in the latter sphere, namely to the reform of military-political training system.

In recent years, the Russian authorities have introduced new legal measures to increase the number of recruits to the armed forces. The administrative measures aimed to limit grounds for avoiding conscription include: loosening of medical regulations on fitness, introducing fewer grounds for postponing military service, and

allowing foreigners to sign up (Prezident Rossii, 2013, 2015). For example, hospitals are required to send medical data on potential conscripts to the military district commissariats throughout the year. As a consequence, 'the disqualification of a draftee on medical grounds will become much more difficult to fake' (Isakova, 2006, p. 28). In March 2015, the Russian State Duma approved the law, in accordance with which a young employee of the government and municipal organization, if found to be illegally avoiding conscription (*uklonist*), must be released from the job and will be banned for 10 years from working in these organizations (Gosudarstvennaâ Duma, 2015). Furthermore, in the early 2000s, military patrols tried to track down such young men in public places. Since 2010, almost all search activities have been in the form of raids on the homes of the young men. Both military personnel and police visit the addresses where the young men are registered and investigate other possible addresses where they might be found (Alekseeva, 2014; Peredruk, 2014). The efficiency of these and other measures in resolving the demography problem is difficult to estimate, in part because there are systemic flaws in reporting the number of conscripts drafted into the armed forces annually.

Preparing young people for military service falls within the remit of youth policy in Russia and is formulated in accordance with the State Programs for Patriotic Education (SPPE). The organizations involved in this process include governmental organizations (Rospatriottsentr, Russian Fleet Support Fund), mixed public–state organizations (DOSAAF, Ûnarmiâ, Russian Military-Historical Society) and non-governmental organizations (including Cossacks organizations) (Krasnaâ zvezda, 2018). While the Defence Ministry oversees the patriotic education, its implementation relies heavily on the Ministry of Education, the Federal Youth Agency, local education youth work authorities, educational institutions, and primarily schools. Jonna Alava's Chapter 9 in this volume provides an overview of the military-patriotic education provided by the recently established Ûnarmiâ and therefore the focus here will be on the pre-draft training provided for the future conscripts in Russia.

The main purpose of the pre-draft training is to improve the physical and mental condition of the conscripts *before* they engage in military service. This policy has long roots in the Soviet period but due to financial and organizational dysfunction it almost ceased to exist during the 1990s and later. In February 2010, a new concept for the federal-level systemic preparation of the recruitment-age population was accepted and a special inter-departmental committee[3] was established to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the planned activities. The concept outlines that the facilitation of the training will be implemented in four phases between 2009 and 2020.

The organization responsible for the actual pre-training as well as the patriotic education of young people is called the Voluntary Association for Assistance to the Army, Air Force, and Navy (Obŝerossijskaâ obŝestvenno-gosudarstvennaâ organizaciâ "Dobrovol′noe obŝestvo sodejstviâ armii, aviacii i flotu Rossii, DOSAAF[4]). In the Soviet period, retired officers used to prepare high school children for conscript service (Thornton, 2011). Currently, the organization is supervised by the Russian government, the Russian president and the key power ministries. The main tasks of the DOSAAF include the development of military-sport education, the training of pilots in selected polytechnic institutions, the military education of reserves, the education of specialists in various technical professions, participation in catastrophe prevention and emergency situations, and the maintenance of the organization during mobilization and wartime (Tarvainen, 2012, p. 27).

In 2018, 460,000 young people took part in the DOSAAF training at over 1,000 training centres around Russia (DOSAAF Rossii, 2019a). The Defence Ministry reported that 27,000, or 17.8%, from 135,000 conscripts recruited in spring 2019 had participated in DOSAAF and vocational school training programmes (Ministerstvo oborony Rossijskoj Federacii, 2019c; Rossijskaâ gazeta, 2019). Not all of DOSAAF trainees eventually enter military service. If we divide those who annually complete DOSAAF training by two (for the spring and autumn drafts), that means that hypothetically around 230,000 trainees are available for the

spring draft, while only 12% (27,000) of conscripts had DOSAAF training in 2018. That makes around 12% of DOSAAF trainees entering military service.

The expected decline in the size of future generations, and problems encountered in recruiting well-educated and motivated conscripts, has forced the military planners to abandon the system based wholly on conscripts and reservists. The current Russian armed forces are a combination of conscript-based forces and 'professional' troops. The latter are volunteers who may, after their 12-month military service, become contract-employed soldiers (*kontraktniks*) with a salary and better conditions. However, according to Roger N. McDermott (2011) and others (see e.g. Thornton, 2011), this system has largely failed to attract volunteers into the armed forces or to increase the predictability required for planning. According to more recent estimates, the Russian Ministry of Defence has managed to increase the number of contract-employed soldiers significantly, although it falls short of the original plan (of 425,000 contract soldiers in 2017). However, the recruitment is likely to become increasingly difficult in the future because of the growing competition of the smaller cohorts of young people among the Russian armed forces, other troop formations (e.g. the National Guard) and the civilian sector for young recruits (Westerlund and Oxenstierna, 2019, pp. 23–24). Against this background, the efforts to further improve the image of the Russian armed forces seem logical.

New obligations for the military-political directorate

Changes introduced in July 2018 to the organization of military-political training in the Russian armed forces seem to have reinvigorated previous Soviet practices. The Main Military Political Directorate was the central military institution in charge of propaganda, ideology and political control in the army in the Soviet Union. It was established amid controversy in spring 1918, primarily to ensure the loyalty of the former tsarist military officers in the Red Army (Kolkowicz, 1967, pp. 81–82). The main task of commissars was to represent the political authority, execute

control over military personnel, and prevent and respond to possible unrest in the army. The Main Political Directorate existed until 1991 as the main controlling organization of the Communist Party in the military. In post-Soviet Russia the military commissars remained only in the conscription centres – called military commissariats – and were in charge of conscription and the organization of mobilization. Furthermore, commissars were tasked with 'forming [the] ideologically firm personality of a serviceman' and 'cohesive military collectives' and their control extended to soldiers and officers (Izvestiâ, 2018a; Ministerstvo oborony Rossijskoj Federacii, 2019c).

The July 2018 presidential decree assigned several new tasks to the Ministry of Defence. Accordingly, the ministry was tasked with organizing 'military-political work' and developing information services, enhancing the prestige of military service in society, preserving and enhancing military-patriotic traditions and organizing historical, cultural and training activities to support these objectives. With the same decree, General-Colonel Andrei Kartapolov was nominated as the head of the Military Political Directorate, responsible for the military-political work in the Russian armed forces (Prezident Rossii, 2018).

The newly created organization was expected to vitalize the military-political work within the military and in so doing contribute to the 'implementing of the state defense policy, maintaining the moral-political and psychological conditions, law, order, and military discipline in the armed forces, forming ideologically firm personality of a serviceman, cohesive military collectives capable of completing their missions in any situation' (Kommersant, 2018; Ministerstvo oborony Rossijskoj Federacii, 2019c). In effect, the directorate has absorbed the structures of the General Staff Directorate, in particular the Department of Culture. The directorate is also in charge of Ûnarmiâ – a youth military organization (see more details in Alava, Chapter 9, this volume) – the patriotic education programmes for civilian population, the ministry's press service and all media production (including over 20 periodicals, the TV, and radio stations).

Furthermore, the new law ‘On the Status of Military Personnel’ that was passed in spring 2019 assigns the military commanders with a new duty: they would be responsible for moral-political conditions in their units (Prezident Rossii, 2019). The explanatory note of the law defines ‘the moral-political conditions’ as follows:

> Moral, political and psychological conditions are understood as a combination of personal ideological and political attitudes, moral values, behavioral motives and moods that have developed under the influence of a system of socio-political and psychological factors that affect the moral readiness and psychological ability of personnel to carry out tasks. The moral-political and psychological conditions are the result of the activation and actualization by the personnel of previously perceived, consciously and internally accepted goals of state policy aimed at ensuring the country’s defense and security. (Poâsnitel′naâ zapiska, 2019)

The concept of ‘moral-political training’ is familiar from the Soviet military lexicon, where it stands for the protection of the socialist Fatherland, spirit of victory, and upbringing of patriotism and proletarian internationalism (Ministerstvo oborony SSSR, 1986, p. 457). In the 2002 Russian military dictionary this term was replaced with the concept of ‘moral-psychological training’. It referred to the psychological-moral qualities of the soldier required for maintaining courage and discipline required for success in the battlefield. The collective and individual training included protection of the military personnel from the information-psychological influence of the adversary (Ministerstvo oborony Rossijskoj Federacii, 2002, pp. 938–939). In fact, in the earlier version of the law ‘On the Status of Military Personnel’ commanders were responsible for the troops’ ‘moral-psychological conditions’, that is, for their moral spirit, psychological conditions, discipline and order as counteraction to enemy’s informational-psychological influence (Garant, 2019).

The difference between these two conceptualizations is that the Soviet version and the formulation included in the 2019 law refer explicitly to the formation of a collective political consciousness

among military personnel. The insertion of the task of cultivating and controlling of 'personal ideological and political attitudes' may indicate that the Main Military Political Directorate attempts to respond to what they perceive as weaknesses: a diversity of ideological views and political attitudes in the military. If this is the case, the policy line undermines the key principles of civil–military relations in the democratic political system and, thus, signals further consolidation of the authoritarian, semi-totalitarian political system in Russia (Rogov, 2016).

The State Duma Deference Committee, in its conclusion on the above-mentioned draft law, pointed out that the new model of military-political training 'is different both from the Soviet model and that of the post-Soviet military-patriotic education'. The aim of the reform is the 'formation of a reliable and devoted defender of the Fatherland, a bearer of the traditional spiritual and moral values of the Russian society, a patriot and a state-defender' (in Russian: *gosudartvennik*) (Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Dumy po oborone, 2019). The concept of *gosudarstvennik* refers in this connection to the ideal of all-encompassing state where individuals are expected to serve the state, not the other way around.

During the first press conference as the new head of the directorate, General-Colonel Kartapolov emphasized that one of the main aspects of military-political training is the development of soldiers' moral spirit. According to Kartapolov, 'it is this spirit that manifests itself in battle – it is heroism, a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of completing a combat mission or for the sake of one's comrades' (RBK, 2018). Unlike in Soviet times, when heroism was envisioned in the context of Communist ideology, the reference point for sacrifice in Kartapolov's description is Orthodox religion. The *Kursk* tragedy, discussed in the next chapter (see Kahla, Chapter 10, this volume), demonstrates this shift vividly.

The return of politruks to the ranks

The cultivation of military-political qualities is delegated to commanders of units, who will receive special training. During the

Soviet era, these officers were also called 'commissars' and later 'politruks' (from the Russian word *političeskij rukovoditel'*, a political leader). In the current Russian army organization, officers tasked with military-political education serve as deputy unit commanders (when the unit has more than 50 servicemen) or instructors (when the unit has fewer than 50 servicemen) in the rank of sergeant serving on contract (Èho Moskvy, 2019). In 2018, the Main Military Political Directorate published the training curricula for the new politruks (Armejskij sbornik, 2018). As early as 2018, a staffing table for motorized rifle companies included the political officers and it was expected that in forthcoming years political officers and instructors would be introduced throughout the military structure (Izvestiâ, 2018b). Furthermore, the Defence Ministry was expected to publish teaching material on current political affairs in Russia and abroad (Èho Moskvy, 2019).

Colonel Ryzhov describes the plan for military-political education in an article published in late 2018 (Armejskij sbornik, 2018). Accordingly, army personnel should attend at least one hour of military-political training every week, or 15–20 minutes of instructions preceding regular daily military training exercises. The content of political training should reflect the specificities of the operational environment, especially during the preparation of a unit for counter-terror, combat or peacekeeping operations. Training curricula outlined 60 hours of annual political training for officers, 80 hours for contract soldiers and 160 hours for conscripts. According to Colonel Ryzhov, the main mission of the newly established Military Political Directorate is to counter 'the Western anti-Russian propaganda conducted by the USA and its satellites during an open information war' (Armejskij sbornik, 2018). As outlined later by Kartapolov (see Krasnaâ zvezda, 2019), this objective can be attained by way of 'forming among the personnel of the armed forces (and the Russian society as a whole) of political consciousness, high moral and strong-willed qualities, immunity to ideological and cultural values that are alien to our society'. This interpretation of tasks ahead of the new directorate are commensurable with the emphasis in both the Military Doctrine

(Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossijskoj Federacii, 2014) and the National Security Strategy (Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossijskoj Federacii, 2015) of the need to protect and consolidate Russian traditional values and cultural integrity.

Conclusions

During the past two decades the Russian government has developed and implemented significant reform of the armed forces. These changes reflect the manning problems caused by objective (demography and health) and subjective (attitudes of population towards army and government) factors, on the perceived external and internal threats (increasing readiness to use various means of warfare against broadly defined threats), on the situation in the army (motivation for contract service and corruption). Almost two decades of patriotic upbringing programmes implemented across the country in the form of commemoration of the Second World War and military training for pupils, the dominance of the state in the traditional electronic media has brought some positive results in increasing the population's trust towards the army.

The government and army leadership have directed significant resources at pre-military training (Ûnarmiâ, DOSAAF) and developed forms of cooperation between the state and the public sector (Cossack organizations), which allowed recruitment to start at a significantly early stage when future conscripts are attending secondary school. While the possibilities to choose civil service remain very limited, the government continues to develop the new incentives for young people to join the armed forces: stable employment, preferences for further careers in state companies etc.

The reintroduction of political officers in the armed forces is expected to facilitate changes in several directions. It is hoped to strengthen the army's control over the political moods of soldiers and officers (a role similar to the Soviet commissars and politruks). The political training is intended to present the image of the enemy and rightfulness of the government's mission and goals, and consequently to strengthen the ideological unity of

the army and tackle the possible discrepancies at an early stage. All in all, the political leadership in Russia seeks to strengthen the loyalty of military personnel towards the political leadership and increase control among the ranks. These are the objectives set for military-political training. Further research is required to ascertain to what extent and in what respect the reintroduction of military-political training has been successful, to understand the changes in civil–military relations and the potential repercussions of the militarization of Russian society.

Notes

[1] This article is based on research published originally at: Svynarenko, A. (2016). The Russian Demography Problem and the Armed Forces Trends and Challenges Until 2035. Finnish Defence Research Agency, URL: https://puolustusvoimat.fi/documents/1948673/2015525/The+Russian+demography+problem+and+the+armed+forces+Trends+and+challenges+until+2035/a2ef95eb-b9ab-4563-ba31-cc1010b3c20c.

[2] At the age of 38, most officers reach the 20-year service mark and become eligible for a good pension and various social benefits (Surkova, 2012).

[3] There is little information available on committee meetings or reports the committee is obliged to provide for the government. The Ministry of Defence publishes a summary of the main targets on its website: http://recrut.mil.ru/career/conscription/preparation/voluntary.htm.

[4] The organization was established in the 1920s and it had important functions in the Soviet military system until the very end of the Soviet Union. In the early 1990s the organization was renamed the Russian Defence Sports-Technical Organization (ROSTO), which undertook responsibility for training the pre-draft-age young men in sports and technical military training. In 2009 the organization regained its original DOSAAF name. In December 2011 it had around 1,000 regional departments and over 300,000 members (Tarvainen, 2012, p. 27; see also DOSAAF Rossii, 2019b).

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CHAPTER 9

Russia's Young Army

Raising New Generations into Militarized Patriots

Jonna Alava

Abstract

This chapter addresses military-patriotic education in Russia. The Russian state pays increasing attention to the military-patriotic upbringing of children and youth, hoping to achieve a larger draft pool and patriotic citizens. In 2015, Ûnarmiâ was founded to unite the country's fragmented military-patriotic youth organizations. The movement's aim was to operate in every school by 2020. By deconstructing the hegemonic discourse of military-patriotic education, I analyse the linguistic ways in which the legitimization of Ûnarmiâ has been constructed. Discourses of *heroism*, *masculinity*, a *beneficial and fun hobby*, *citizen-soldier* and *military traditionalism* include a variety of key strategies of legitimization for influencing audiences. Discourses suggest that Ûnarmiâ's purpose is to raise patriotic citizens, who support the prevailing

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regime and contribute to solving the demographic crisis by repeating 'traditional' gender roles, rather than preparing young people for war.

Keywords: military-patriotic education, Ûnarmiâ, Russia, patriotism, militarism

Introduction

> We would like, and we will do it, to create hundreds and hundreds of centres for patriotic education, hundreds of Ûnarmiâ centres throughout the country. (Sergei Shoigu, RIA Novosti, 2016)

This chapter examines the establishment and legitimization of military-patriotic education as an element of militarization in Russia by analysing the meanings associated with Ûnarmiâ, the All-Russia National Military Patriotic Social Movement Association 'Young Army'.[1] In recent years in Russia, patriotism has increasingly meant militarism and preparing for war. However, this is not the only interpretation, as Lassila, Mitikka and Zavadskaya, and Nazarenko show in their chapters in this volume. By deconstructing the hegemonic discourse of military-patriotic education, I analyse the linguistic ways in which legitimization of Ûnarmiâ is constructed. My research questions are: What does the re-emergence of military-patriotic education represent and what kinds of meanings does it acquire? How has the meaning of Ûnarmiâ been explained in official and semi-official contexts? How and why was it established? What kind of identities are formed and given to members of the movement?

Despite the scale of the rising patriotism in Russia, there is relatively little research on military-patriotic education (see for example Bækken, 2019; Laruelle, 2015; Rapoport, 2009; Sanina, 2017; Sieca-Kozlowski, 2010; Sperling, 2009), or research that combines gender and patriotism/militarism (for example Eichler, 2019; Kalinina, 2017; Riabov and Riabova, 2014). The rapid growth of Ûnarmiâ requires closer examination to understand the direction

of militarization processes among youth in Russia. My study provides new insights into that area.

I consider discourses in the macro-level context as a standardized way of describing certain types of phenomena in society. In the research analysis, I apply critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is well suited to the material dealing with power relations. From a discursive perspective, texts always have many functions, as they represent the world and display social relationships and identities (Fairclough, 1997, p. 40). CDA is a tool to decode relationships between language and ideology, language and gender, and language and power. Often, studies employing CDA focus on the linguistic construction of national identity and the process of 'othering' (Reyes, 2011), which are central for this study as well. In CDA, the discursive practices of each community are perceived as networks – which can be called the order of discourse. In the order of discourse, different discourses overlap and mix but can also be tightly separated (Fairclough, 1995, p. 77).

In the context of this study, it is assumed that the state actors are in a hegemonic position to define the objectives of military-patriotic education and the meaning of Ûnarmiâ. In other words, owing to their authoritative position and entangled in its wider powers, they have a better ability to create and maintain specific discourses. I have divided this hegemonic 'macrodiscourse' into subdiscourses or groups of statements, which are all linked together but occur at various scales in different groups of the source material. These include: 'heroism', 'masculinity', 'beneficial and fun hobby', 'citizen-soldier' and 'military traditionalism'. The hegemonic discourse excludes different points of view. Such issues as pacifism, different pedagogical perspectives, youth's own vision and voice, references to science and questioning the appropriateness of the movement are marginalized. Oppositional voices are almost muted in the mainstream media. However, as will be shown in this chapter, the fact that hegemonic discourse needs constant reinforcing and repeating indicates that it is not universally accepted and has an alternative, as has already been suggested in this volume.

The rest of this chapter is organized in the following way. In the next section I will briefly describe the main concepts used in the research analysis and the research data. After that, I will discuss the historical formation of military-patriotic education in Russia and the emergence of Ûnarmiâ as an organization. This is then followed by the research analysis, where I distinguish a network of hegemonic discourses that legitimate the creation of Ûnarmiâ. In the concluding part of this chapter, I will identify specific linguistic ways used in support of hegemonic discourses and argue that the legitimation of Ûnarmiâ relies heavily on military traditionalism and enemy images.

Research Framework: Key Concepts and Research Material

Key concepts: legitimization, ideology, identity

In this section I will introduce the key concepts used in the research analysis, which include legitimization, ideology and identity. Legitimization is here understood as a strategy employed by social actors to justify the development of military-patriotic education and related youth activities. The process of legitimization is enacted by argumentation that takes advantage of social ideas, thoughts, actions and declarations. It is aimed to obtain or maintain power, to achieve social acceptance, to reach popularity and to improve community relationships. To achieve an interlocutor's approval and support, the act of legitimization may appeal to emotions, rationality, hypothetical future, expertise and altruism (Reyes, 2011). Often, the process of legitimization strives to connect the past, present and future into a coherent narrative. Political actors display the present as a period that requires making decisions about taking action. These actions are related to a cause (in the past) and a consequence (may occur in the future) (Reyes, 2011). For example, in the research material, the Great Patriotic War represents 'the past', whereas 'the upcoming war' forms the possible future.

Another key term used in this chapter is ideology, which has a significant role in processes through which relations of power are established, maintained, enacted and transformed (Fairclough, 1995, p. 26). According to Žižek, in the classical Marxist definition, ideologies are discourses that promote false ideas or 'consciousness' in subjects about the political regimes they live in. However, this Marxist notion has been disputed in the humanities, questioning that there could ever be any One such theoretically accessible Truth and that the notion of ideology is irrelevant to describe contemporary socio-political life, because of the widespread cynicism towards political authorities. On the other hand, subjects today can know political regimes' false ideas very well but act as if they did not know (Sharpe, 2020) and I argue that this is very much true in contemporary Russia, where double standards familiar from the Soviet Union still exist at some levels of society.

Although the main emphasis of the study is on the meanings given to legitimacy, representations of identities that emerged during the analysis require also attention. Identities interact with ideological prescriptions about roles and relationships in specific domains of social action that assign preferred properties, desires and needs to individuals (Bamberg, Schiffrin and De Fina, 2006, p. 135). This is a matter of social control. In each discourse presented later in this chapter, 'correct' values stand out strongly. Instead of a dialogue between youth and the authorities, the youth is represented as a mass that can be influenced in the desired direction. The discourses on Ûnarmiâ offer to the youth identities of a good citizen and a soldier. In addition, Russianness, traditional gender roles, self-sacrifice, humility, hard work and the pursuit of heroism are the most important building blocks of Ûnarmiân identity.

The research material

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of how the establishment of Ûnarmiâ was received and what kind of arguments were given to it in Russian society, my data are selected from four

different sources: the state's official documents, military periodicals, mainstream media and texts produced by Ûnarmiâ itself. As the movement was established in late 2015, I chose to review material from 2015 to the present day. Next, I will introduce the research material in more detail.

First, the State Patriotic Education Programmes (2001–2020) provide a basis for the hegemonic discourse. The military aspects of patriotic education have strengthened with every five-year state programme since 2001. Even in the first programme, the basis for the creation of the new youth organization was established, as there were plans to carry out military-historical, military-technical and military sports clubs and training centres (Patriotičeskoe vospitanie graždan, 2001). It seems that over the years DOSAAF[2] has lost its leading position as a leading military-patriotic educator and has therefore made room for a new player. Practices of military units over educational organizations have been strengthened continuously and today Ûnarmiâ fulfils most of the measures outlined in the programmes (ibid.; Patriotičeskoe vospitanie graždan, 2015).

In addition to these programmes, methodological handbooks for educational organizations (*Practices of Interaction between Educational Organizations and Military-Patriotic Associations with Military Units and the Development of Interaction between Educational Organizations and Military-Patriotic Associations with Military Units*) published by the Ministry of Education and Science proved to be an interesting source for discourse analysis as they justify military-patriotic education from many perspectives.

However, although these programmes seem effective on paper, critics question their effectivity. Anna Sanina (2019) has argued that patriotic narratives emanating from the state programmes create an impression that the Kremlin has a centralized and well-organized programme for supporting militarism and nationalism in Russia. In reality, there is no such grand design and the programmes lack concrete tools and meanings for patriotism formation. Furthermore, despite certain seemingly noble goals, like the integration of less fortunate children into Russian

society and the elimination of youth criminality, military-patriotic programmes appear to have more narrow objectives, such as increasing the number of potential recruits to the armed forces and paramilitary units (Eurasia Daily Monitor, 2019).

The second category of research material includes military journals that more often than not reflect and consolidate hegemonic discourses. The analysed articles are selected from the East View database, which contains over 40 major Russian military and security publications. I chose articles from the years 2015–2020 with the word 'Ûnarmiâ' for a closer look from the journals *Vestnik Akademii voennyh nauk* (3 articles), *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* (17) and *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* (14). In addition, I overviewed several articles from the Ministry of Defence's newspaper *Krasnaâ zvezda* (803 articles), but, because of the large number of hits, I chose the articles for deeper analysis mainly based on their titles or whether I found references to them in other contexts.

The third type of research material is produced by the Ûnarmiâ organization and it is compiled from their website and social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram from the years 2015–2020. Ûnarmiâ is especially active on Instagram and publishes daily information on its activities. Among hundreds of social media postings, I focused on the representations of identities and gender roles.

The fourth category includes mainstream media documents from the years 2015–2020 that I searched from Integrum. I selected the databases 'Central press' and 'Regional press'. The search with the word 'Ûnarmiâ' returned 8,924 documents altogether. Owing to the large number of hits, I chose to take only Russia's most-read daily newspapers (Statista, 2020) for further analysis, so I reviewed texts from *Argumenty i Fakty* (16 texts), *Komsomol'skaâ pravda* (58), *Izvestiâ* (13) and *Kommersant* (17). I left out of the review the government's newspaper *Rossijskaâ gazeta*, as well as *Moskovskij komsomolec*, which is one of Ûnarmiâ's sponsors. These newspapers would hardly have brought any new perspective to discourse analysis but would have repeated hegemonic discourse familiar from the state documents. In fact, the material

from the mainstream media and military periodicals saturated quite quickly – the discourses repeated themselves and new arguments were rare and marginal.

The fifth and last category includes media reports and other material collected from popular newspapers and academic databases, googling and navigating through sources from one article to another. With a basic knowledge of the Russian media field, I relied on my judgement when assessing the significance of sources. The research material collected in this way is not exhaustive but offers a variety of texts and contrastive discourses for discourse analysis. Critical opinions and attitudes towards Ûnarmiâ are easily found from 'opposition' media like newspapers *Novaâ gazeta* and *Meduza*, but few authors also expressed them in the state-owned mainstream media.

Militarism and the Military-Patriotic Youth Organizations in Russia

The centuries-long tradition of symbolic unity between the military and patriotism explains why the military rationale of patriotic education does not need to be explained: patriotic education itself is a code phrase that implies military preparation, training and education (Rapoport, 2009). The Cambridge Dictionary (2020) defines militarism as 'the belief that it is necessary to have strong armed forces and that they should be used in order to win political or economic advantages'. Furthermore, Vagts (1959, p. 17) defines militarism as follows: 'Militarism covers every system of thinking and valuing and every complex of feelings which rank military institutions and ways above the ways of civilian life, carrying military mentality and models of acting and decision into the civilian sphere.' Militarization instead is 'a concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power' (ibid., p. 13). However, Håvard Bækken argues that military-patriotic education in post-Soviet Russia is a textbook example of militarism. Patriotic education is an attempt to use the military to socialize youth into good human beings and

citizens, which is not necessarily related to war-fighting capabilities. Even though the term militarism fits better with Russian patriotic education as a whole, Ûnarmiâ is a very much related to 'war fighting', and its members are subjugated to the needs of the army. Therefore, in my view, it is appropriate to use both terms.

The Soviet Union organized a massive propaganda campaign focused on the need to prepare fighters for an 'inevitable war' (Sperling, 2009). Today, patriotic education penetrates all state and social institutions again and it is coordinated at the highest and the lowest levels of government (Omelchenko et al., 2015). In contrast to international scholarly analysis that has attributed patriotic education initiation to Vladimir Putin, Bækken (2019) argues that patriotic discourses were already formed in the 1990s in traditionalist circles within the Russian military, where the armed forces were seen as a bearer of historical continuity and 'Russianness'. Increasing the prestige of military service was not the only aim, but the fact that patriotic education served as a form of social outreach. Thus, moral values and social concerns are as important as military security in the current patriotic project (Bækken, 2019). My review of military periodicals supports these arguments. Military circles see patriotic education as a long continuation, where the turmoil following the collapse of the Soviet Union was just an exception.

Ûnarmiâ is the latest version of military-patriotic youth organizations established by the Kremlin. In 2000, in Putin's first term, a first 'presidential fan club' 'Idušie vmeste' ('Moving together') was born to inculcate values of a regime in the youth. In the autumn of 2004, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine rose up and led to the creation of a bigger and nationwide organization, the Youth Democratic Anti-Fascist Movement 'Naši' ('Ours'). Naši was the regime's ideological vehicle, whose purpose was to create a new elite and prevent a colour revolution in Russia (van Herpen, 2015, pp. 123–135). Around 2007, Naši's political importance decreased and finally flamed out, owing to its internal disintegration and loss of political power of its leaders, which also resulted in a loss of funding (Mijnssen, 2014, pp. 181–182). As the Kremlin's foreign

policy became more assertive after the annexation of Crimea, a new youth group was once again needed to better reflect this more militant approach, and Ûnarmiâ was born (Finch, 2019). Although Naši is not what is referred to in the Ûnarmiâ debate, the threats that these organizations should respond to resemble each other, e.g. Western values, colour revolutions and oppositional movements in Russia.

Besides openly political youth organizations, several military-patriotic organizations that existed in the Soviet Union have been revived or expanded in the Russian Federation, including the Suvorov military and Nakhimov naval school, the cadet corps, Cossack military schools, the Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation and Navy (DOSAAF) and the Ready for Labour and Defence (GTO) training system. Since 2013, girls have been allowed to apply to many of these traditional boys' military educational institutions (Yandex, 2020), which may indicate that the role of women in war work is changing. Also, thousands of private or regional patriotic clubs are extremely diverse in Russia and many of them describe themselves with an additional adjective – cultural, military, civic, Orthodox or historical (Laruelle, 2015). Ûnarmiâ is somewhere between these traditional military schools, hobby clubs and political projects. In the constitutive meeting of Ûnarmiâ, members of the board considered it important that Ûnarmiâ not be involved in politics (Mironovič, 2016), which in turn is ridiculous as it is clear that Ûnarmiâ supports the current regime and vice versa. Still, the history with Naši has been learned and Ûnarmiâ is now more firmly tied to stable institutions like DOSAAF and the Ministry of Defence to avoid political fluctuations.

Establishment of Ûnarmiâ and Its Main Activities

Ûnarmiâ was formally established by the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, Sergei Shoigu, on 29 October 2015, the anniversary of the founding of Komsomol, which is hardly

a coincidence. Any 8- to 17-year-old student, military-patriotic club or search squad can voluntarily join the movement. As of September 2020, Ûnarmiâ had over 719,000 members (Ûnarmiâ, 2020). The authorities announced that the goal is to increase the number of members to one million this year (Radio Svoboda, 2019), but the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have slowed growth, unless the target was already too ambitious.

The term 'Ûnarmiâ' was already used during the Civil War in 1917 to denote underage participants. In the Soviet era, the term referred to teams in Pioneers' military games 'Zarnica' and 'Orlenok' (Vološinov, 1989, pp. 3–33). Another meaning for Ûnarmiâ was born when, from the mid-1960s, children's clubs under the Pioneers' umbrella organization spread the memory of the Great Patriotic War (Popkov, 2016). In the late 1980s, the Ûnarmiâ movement loosely united small military-patriotic clubs, created on the basis of organizations of Great Patriotic War veterans (Meduza, 2016; Omelchenko et al., 2015). Today's Ûnarmiâ is an official organization strictly controlled by the state. Still, it calls itself a movement, which creates an illusion of a bottom-up structured NGO.

In Ûnarmiâ's main message, citizenship has been elevated over military content, as 'Ûnarmiâ's mission is to raise citizens and patriots and teach the child an active civic position. Furthermore, Ûnarmiâ forms a positive motivation to fulfil the constitutional duty and prepares young men for service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. The movement prepares its members to enter the military universities of the country, where they receive free higher education and social support from the Ministry of Defence. (Ûnarmiâ, 2020.) Thus, it offers its members a social rise in society.

Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu justified the establishment of Ûnarmiâ by saying that:

> To make young people protect Russia with weapons in their hands, the readiness and willingness to serve must be born in childhood and adolescence. To form a positive attitude towards

> the army as a public institution and military affairs as an occupation, the state must participate systematically, with all relevant resources in military-patriotic work. (Eliseeva and Tihonov, 2016)

Ûnarmiâ's activities are divided into four parts: spiritual and moral development, social development, physical and sports development, and intellectual development (Ûnarmiâ, 2020). Despite the 'civilian' core message, every action includes a military starting point. While collectivism is emphasized in rhetoric, its competitive and athletic nature cuts across all activities of the movement, revealing that the intention is to highlight talented individuals.

Powerful sponsors behind the scheme

Although Ûnarmiâ belongs administratively under the military-patriotic wing of the Russian Movement of Schoolchildren (RMS), the Ministry of Defence has taken the key role as leader and organizer of Ûnarmiâ (Popkov, 2016). Ûnarmiâ has many partners and sponsors, such as Russia's state-owned bank Sberbank, TV companies Zvezda and Rossiâ 24, newspaper *Moskovskij komsomolec* and many other state-related companies and administrations (Ûnarmiâ, 2020). One of the main sponsors of Ûnarmiâ may be related to Evgenij Prigožin, the sanctioned oligarch who is also behind the notorious private military company Wagner Group (Eurasia Daily Monitor, 2019). In particular, the production of the movement's uniforms is associated with Prigožin (Radio Svoboda, 2018).

Typically, the head of the regional Ûnarmiâ organization is a former *silovik* or a person close to the security forces, who is a part of the regional ruling elite or loyal to them (Sanina, 2017, p. 113). The infrastructure of the movement is tied to the locations of military units, DOSAAF and the central sports club of the army. Ûnarmiâ cooperates with relevant clubs of young rescuers, young guards, young police assistants and traffic inspectors and the movements

of the Russian Cossacks. Statistics on how many Ûnarmiâns join the troops are closely monitored. In 2019, the number was 1,000 and the tendency to increase continues (Mišina, 2019). The central venue for Ûnarmiâ's events is the Russian armed forces' 'Park Patriot', a huge military-themed park opened in 2016 near Moscow, where 'everything is permeated with patriotism' (Park Patriot, 2019). Similar parks are being planned all over Russia. In the year 2020, 'Ûnarmiâ houses', where the kids can study after school, are being set up in all regions, in each garrison and cultural institutions, as well as in regional centres of military-patriotic education and preparation of citizens for military service (Cygankov, 2019).

For the year 2020, Ûnarmiâ has planned 276 different projects and events. For example, Ûnarmiâ's social advertising will be placed on the streets of Moscow and other cities, and the movement will organize the work 'Immortal Regiment of My School' in educational institutions nationwide and participate in the spring and autumn in rituals of sending conscripts to military service locations (Ûnarmejskij god, 2020). Foreign policy enters the picture, as the movement will establish new units at the embassies of the Russian Federation abroad in 2020 (ibid.). Ûnarmiâ is supposed to operate in every school in 2020 (Novye izvestiâ, 2019). Schools are expected to open a room for study and recreation for students who have joined Ûnarmiâ. The room must contain certain types of equipment, a picture of President Vladimir Putin, samples of small arms, a map, a flag of Russia etc. The annexation of Crimea is strongly present in Ûnarmiâ's educational materials and visual imagery. These details remind of the Soviet era, when in the 1970s and the 1980s in the Soviet Union each educational institution had to have the same kind of educational material base (Sanina, 2017, pp. 110–113). It seems as if Ûnarmiâ is wanted as a permanent institution in society, like Komsomol was. That is why the ideological commitment of the individual member is not so important, because as many young people as possible are involved. Of course, there always exist ideological components, but it seems

that Ûnarmiâ's core is more educational than Naši's ideological and political actions.

Recruitment takes place in primary schools

The movement recruits young people directly from the schools. Ûnarmiâ's social media posts often glorify the classes in which each student has joined the movement. The head of Ûnarmiâ, Roman Romanenko, says that the recruitment process has become so efficient that it is no longer possible to stop it, as the kids keep inviting new friends to the movement (Èho Moskvy, 2019). The movement has several factors to attract new members. Visuality is widely used in symbols, artefacts and clothes. The Ûnarmiâ online store consists of 95 different military-style clothes and accessories, the prices of which are high compared to average salaries (Magazin Ûnarmiâ, 2020). Most of the members buy uniforms by themselves, but some regional departments offer them for free (Zajcev, 2019). Several sports heroes, actresses and warlords work in Ûnarmiâ or appear in its events, being role models for young people and bringing visibility to the organization. The big carrot is that more than 20 Russian universities already award extra points in their entrance exams to students who belong or have belonged to Ûnarmiâ (Èho Moskvy, 2019). Although membership of Ûnarmiâ is officially voluntary, there is an informal obligation to join for the children of military personnel, public servants and defence industry employees (Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, 2020), as well for orphanage children, whose custodian is the state. *Novaâ gazeta* notes that the same phenomenon as in the USSR, when Komsomol came to orphanages, is being repeated today (Tarasov, 2019). This kind of measure originates in revolutionary history, when the Cheka[3] created the Emergency Commission for taking charge of orphans, who later came to form a large part of the NKVD officers.[4] The phenomenon is not new in this century either, as a presidential decree in 2000 renewed the tradition, putting the army in charge of dealing with social problems not taken on by the state (Sieca-Kozlowski, 2010).

The Legitimating Discourses of Ûnarmiâ

Earlier in this volume, Jussi Lassila and Salla Nazarenko introduced several different perceptions of patriotism in Russia. Jussi Lassila distinguishes between two interpretations of patriotism in the context of youth socialization. In a *broad* view, patriotism is seen as a nexus of all good things that must be fostered further. The *narrow* approach urges us not to forget the ultimate goal of all patriotism – preparation for military service, and indeed for war. In my discourse analysis, perhaps surprisingly the *broad* approach dominates, even though Ûnarmiâ is a paramilitary organization. Nazarenko, in turn, distinguished three narratives of patriotism among Russian TV journalists: *intimate patriotism*, *military patriotism* and *infowar patriotism*. From the perspective of these findings, the narrative of military patriotism is the most dominant in my material, but I have named it *military traditionalism*, in order to emphasize the role of history in the legitimization of military-patriotic education. Taken together, discourses of military-patriotic education analysed in this chapter follow the golden mean: they are not as pacifist as intimate patriotism can be, but not so belligerent as *infowar patriotism* or the above-mentioned *narrow approach* entails.

Heroism: self-sacrifice for the honour and glory of Russia

If Ûnarmiâ were described in one word, it could be heroism. The word and its derivatives, 'hero and heroic', are repeated more in Ûnarmiâ's discourses than anything else. Heroism encompasses many things, like pride, self-sacrifice and faith. By taking an oath, a member joins Ûnarmiâ, in which he or she promises to prepare him/herself to serve the Fatherland. According to the code of the movement, the honour and glory of Russia are the highest values of Ûnarmiâ (Kodeks Ûnarmiâ, 2018). Heroism is linked to 'Russia's special position in the world'. As the military periodical *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* writes,

> At the time of the formation of the Ûnarmiâ, the aims of patriotic ideology were discussed: The new ideology was seen to unite the vectors of interests of the state, society and the evolutionarily developing biosphere, which must lead to an increase existence of Russians and Russia on Earth. (Sokolov, 2016)

Sacrifice is another concept intrinsically linked to heroic discourse. It can be associated with religious (Russia) or secular (Soviet Union) discourses. In the Soviet official commemorative culture, children and adolescents – young partisans, little soldiers adopted by Soviet army units, helpers of the underground resistance – were used as icons of heroic sacrifice and patriotism (Zhurzhenko, 2017).

In Chapter 10 in this volume, Elina Kahla points to the current church–state–military collaboration model, which glorifies blood sacrifice and argues that new martyrs strike as of ultimate significance for Russian society's identity formation. The Moscow Patriarchate sees that future warriors need not only patriotic education but 'the constant connection with God to maintain their morale, which can be achieved by developing a link between church and state' (Russkaâ Pravoslavnaâ Cerkov′, 2015). The church strengthens the importance of self-sacrifice as part of the heroism in the name of faith. Unlike Ûnarmiâ's Soviet predecessors, religion is present in the movement's material as members, for example, pose beside icons (see e.g. Ûnarmiâ Instagram, 2019a). Another example of sacrifice discourse is the project 'Pioneers–Heroes of the Great Patriotic War', which started at the beginning of 2020 on Ûnarmiâ's Instagram and Facebook accounts. The project presents young people and children who lost their lives while protecting their homeland. Thus far, the stories of over 50 children have been presented. Here is one example.

> After the death of his father at age 13, Valera Volkov becomes the 'son of a regiment' in the 7th Marine Brigade. Along with adults, with a weapon in his hands, he restrains the attacks of the enemy. According to memoirs of fellow soldiers, he loved poetry and often read Maâkovskij for his comrade. … In July 1942, reflecting an enemy attack, he died heroically, throwing a bunch of

> grenades under the advancing tank. For courage and bravery, he was posthumously awarded the Order of the Patriotic War of the 1st degree. (Ûnarmiâ Facebook, 2020)

Heroism through self-sacrifice is not only yesterday's business. Last year, Ria Novosti (2019) reported on a heroic 13-year-old Ûnarmiân boy, Dima, who saved two children from drowning but died himself. Ria Novosti described how 'Dima dreamed of becoming a soldier to protect people'. These narratives and imageries of children as heroic little soldiers have increased heavily in Russia in recent years to support the state-led militarization.

Masculinity: gendered warfare adores 'real men'

In the Soviet Union, ideal masculinity materialized in the mythic image of a soldier, a young pioneer working for the greater good of his nation, while the feminine ideal was a young and active woman and fertile mother giving birth to new soldiers (Kalinina, 2017). Today, Oleg Riabov and Tatiana Riabova have argued, an important factor contributing to the authorities' high popularity is the 'remasculinization of Russia' – the politics of identity directed towards creating a positive collective identity with the help of gender discourse, particularly by promulgating masculine images of Russia. Politics of identity conducted by the new Russian authorities under Putin had to take into consideration the demands of the 1990s' nationalist and communist oppositions, who called to restore collective male dignity, for the restoration of national pride. The Russian mass media masculinizes Putin's image with the help of militarization – Putin is represented as a military serviceman (among other caricatured images). Historically, warfare has played a crucial role in determining what 'being a real man' is all about at the symbolic, institutional and corporeal levels (Riabov and Riabova, 2014). Furthermore, militarism as an ideology values the military and its members over society. Militarism relies on, reproduces and helps justify hierarchical and unequal gender roles and relations. Militarized femininity is a contradictory construction, in which female soldiers are seen as

equal to, and still different from, male soldiers. This reproduces masculinity as the norm of soldiering rather than acknowledging women as soldiers in their own right (Eichler, 2019).

Even though Ûnarmiâ's mission is to prepare the boys for the army, many girls belong to the movement. Girls are constantly represented in the movement's pictures and texts, but, in the absence of official figures, it is not clear what percentage of members are women. The proportion of women in Ûnarmiâ has raised the question of whether the role of females in the Russian military context is growing and how it is changing. Women are not subject to general conscription but can serve under contract. At present, 40,000 women are serving as soldiers and about 280,000 women hold civilian posts in the Russian armed forces, and the number is increasing (Krasnaâ zvezda, 2019). Despite ostensible gender equality, Ûnarmiâ is strictly gendered. The movement organizes, for example, the beauty contest 'Miss Ûnarmiâ' and, at balls, girls wear prom dresses while boys keep their Ûnarmiân uniforms. One interesting detail is that many Ûnarmiân girls wear *bantiki* – white and puffy hair bows – which became part of (gendered) school uniforms in the Soviet Union in the 1940s. The bows became a symbol of idealized Soviet childhood, reflecting national prosperity, development and happiness (Millei et al., 2019). Ûnarmiâ has regularized the use of *bantiki*s again.

However, masculinity and femininity do not follow the same classification as the division into women and men. Women can have 'masculine' qualities, for example braveness, strength and power, which are always positive 'extra qualities'. For example, one female chief of a regional Ûnarmiâ headquarters is described in a social media post as follows: 'this fragile and sweet woman has a strong character and enough courage to lead a whole region's Ûnarmiâns' (Ûnarmiâ Instagram, 2019b). These examples reveal that, women can 'grow up' in the ranks of Ûnarmiâ and attain qualities considered traditionally masculine, but they must remain feminine: fragile, sweet and beautiful. The opposite situation is not positive or even possible in discourses of Ûnarmiâ. Boys have to become 'men' who under no circumstances should have 'weak'

feminine attributes or qualities like fragility. This kind of education is in line with the 'traditional gender roles' that are nowadays promoted strongly in Russian society. In summary, women can be involved in militarized projects like Ûnarmiâ and be equal with men as soldiers, but the default is that they must remain feminine and thereby support masculinity.

Fertility is strongly tied to the need to develop military-patriotic education and it is thereby linked to gender issues. Demographic problems need to be solved to achieve a larger draft pool (Sperling, 2009). The conservative party of the Orthodox Church is also eager to participate in this project. The state's military-patriotic goals are logically linked to the traditional gender roles promoted in the Orthodox Church. The church became a social tool supporting the state's initiatives in the realm of family, motherhood, social problems and children's and youth education (Adamsky, 2019, pp. 175–177). The issue of fertility rates is not easily noticeable in Ûnarmiâ's material but it is a major component of 'traditional Russian values' upon which patriotic programmes and Ûnarmiâ are based. Ûnarmiâ encourages youth to take on a traditional lifestyle that includes a spouse (opposite sex), a family with kids, a healthy lifestyle, religion and a military or civilian career. This in turn is linked to the 'beneficial hobby' discourse, which emphasizes athletic and healthy lifestyle. Let us now turn to it.

A beneficial and fun hobby for everybody

When browsing Ûnarmiâ's material on social media, it is clear that this discourse is the number one means of rhetoric aimed at young people and their parents. My findings from Ûnarmiâ's material and military periodicals support those of Bækken (2019) and Sieca-Kozlowski (2010) that patriotic education is seen as a means to save youth from criminality, alcohol, drugs and the influence of television and social media. Alongside basic military training, the Kremlin wants to offer via Ûnarmiâ a greater structure, discipline and guidance for today's younger generation, among which suicide rates are high, alcohol and drug abuse

remain a problem, and gangs are growing – particularly linked with social media (Finch, 2019).

Ûnarmiâ's peaceful goal has been emphasized in the movement's social media texts, in which Ûnarmiâ is presented as a developing hobby for children and youth. Any kind of military matter is seen as a fun and adventurous thing. As Sergei Shoigu put it in *Kommersant*, 'through the army and DOSAAF, Ûnarmiâ gets access to all the joys of military service'; he continues that 'you will have the opportunity to fly aeroplanes and jump on a parachute, dive underwater and cruise on our warships and submarines, shoot with everything that shoots, except with rockets' (Berseneva, 2016). Joy is related to Soviet nostalgia. The military periodical *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* rejoices that 'in Soviet patriotic summer camps, one could hold a real machine gun and feel like a real hero' and that by now 'Russian children can fulfil these and other wildest dreams by joining the Ûnarmiâ' (Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie, 2017).

Besides joy, the beneficial and fun hobby discourse emphasizes useful and practical civic skills. It gives hints of a beneficial future, where the citizen with a history in Ûnarmiâ can expect better advantages than others, like having a good physical condition and everyday skills or having a career in the government or the military.

When it comes to the needs of young people, adults get the floor in every discourse. The material reveals that authors and adults *know* naturally what youth is like, and they want to share their childhood memories with contemporary youth. The approach is paternal and sceptical through the material. For example, the author of a military journal criticizes youth by saying that 'it is very problematic to raise a citizen and patriot of teenagers with empty files in their heads' (ibid.), and continues that, 'because of the fear of maintaining a communist ideology, patriotic education was abandoned as well'. The talk of 'empty files' reveals disappointment with 'digital native' young people.

The contradiction to the joy is that military-patriotic education can be used as a punishment. The Russian Ministry of Internal

Affairs has intensified the work to develop measures to prevent crimes related to the manipulation of the minds of minors through social networks. Young people who commit these crimes are sent to military-patriotic camps (Argumenty i Fakty, 2019). This reveals the ideological emphasis of the project and questions its voluntary nature and 'fun'. These measures draw lines for appropriate citizenship, which I will discuss next.

Citizen-soldier: the ideal of a new citizen

The representation of identity is an instrument of power. Patriotism as an official ideology of Russia forms ideal identities. Ûnarmiâ's discourses form a clear representation of a desirable or ideal identity. The ideal Ûnarmiân is patriotic, collective, athletic, traditional, active, spontaneous within limits, ready to fight and self-sacrifice, a proud Russian who knows the country's history and respects it. All these qualities are easily found in patriotic discourses, but they are highlighted in Ûnarmiâ's communication.

The Russian state wants patriotism to combine an idea of a multinational 'all-Russian' country as a core value and the meaning of life (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017a). This might be difficult to achieve, as Mitikka and Zavadskaya (Chapter 6, this volume) show that people consider themselves more 'local patriots' who value the *malaâ rodina* (regional homeland), while the whole of Russia is too 'abstract' to be represented. Furthermore, 'traditional norms of Russian society like moral education, being hardworking, knowledgeable and respectful of one's own and other nations' culture, are based on the ideas of serving Fatherland' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017b). Although these norms are quite universal in many countries, why does Russia feel the need to instil these values increasingly on young people? One military periodical explains that, 'without patriotism, the youth could be modern, prospective and effectively developing, but lose its identity and itself as a nation in a difficult modern situation' (Astanini, 2016). The writer adds that 'young people must love their motherland like their own

mother: the mother may not always be right, she might be too strict, but she's a mother'. Such an argument emphasizes that one should love his/her homeland, regardless of how it treats him/her. Citizens must be humble.

For an Ûnarmiân it is 'unacceptable to be lazy at work and study, to behave illegally, to interfere with normal communication or to provoke violations of the law and standards of public morality, advocate the values of subcultures that erode the foundations of the national culture of Russia, participate in youth and other public associations promoting extremist ideology or asocial lifestyle, distort the state language of the Russian Federation and its constituent republics and use of slang speech' (Kodeks Ûnarmiâ, 2018). Rules are strict and prohibition of being interested in 'subcultures against national culture', 'interference with normal communication' and an 'asocial lifestyle' tells us about attempts to guide and limit youth culture without specifying what these vague concepts mean in each (political) situation.

One of the most important tasks of military-patriotic education is to ensure the national security of the country by increasing the prestige of military service. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, despite the fact that 80% of young people have a positive attitude towards military service, there are still many who consider service 'a meaningless occupation that should be avoided'. The ministry believes these numbers indicate the need for more thorough military-patriotic work 'to root out pacifist sentiments in children and youth' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017b). This fragment reveals pacifism as an unwanted ideology in society: a good citizen cannot be a pacifist. These official documents assume that the reader (citizen) shares the same original assumption of the danger of pacifism and the importance of early military-patriotic education. At the same time it makes clear that pacifism is something that must be naturally left out of the debate. This shows that hegemonic discourse is limited, even though it might create the picture of extensive discussion in society. Soldiers are the chief example of today's patriots to emulate (Bækken, 2019). When history writing in Russia

increasingly means that victorious military history and military-patriotic education intertwine with the school schedule, the soldier and the citizen become one.

The confrontation between 'us' and 'them' is also present when discussing what a good citizen is like. Liberals are increasingly treated as the current power elite, as we have seen in arrests and harsh sentences that followed protests in Moscow in 2019. The online newspaper *Russkaâ planeta* writes that 'the so-called patriotic camp considers Ûnarmiâ an excellent institution for educating the younger generation, while liberals see it as propaganda of militarism and the cult of the Kalashnikov' (Zajcev, 2019). The phrases 'propaganda of militarism' and 'cult of the Kalashnikov' have negative connotations and imply that the liberals are over-reacting. At the same time they set the 'patriotic camp' as the 'normal' position – patriots are naturally and already within the frame of common sense. This confrontation is also present in Ûnarmiâ's code, which calls for 'to show tact and attentiveness in dealing with persons not participating in the movement' (Kodeks Ûnarmiâ, 2018). Here 'we', i.e. patriots, are represented as something more intelligent and fairer than 'others', and therefore have a responsibility to behave discreetly towards others, who, reading between the lines, not may know 'the right way'.

Military traditionalism

Military traditionalism is an undertone of the military-patriotic education in present-day Russia (Bækken, 2019). This discourse was especially strengthened before celebrating the 75th anniversary of victory in the Second World War and the new constitutional amendments in 2020. Besides 'traditions', this discourse effectively exploits threat and enemy images to legitimate military-patriotic education among youth.

The Russian military press has called for years for a return to 'Russianness' in the traditional sense by using a certain framing, language and rhetoric. Discourses that rely on epic and glorious military history and traditions help to transcend ethnic and

religious borders and are useful to the regime, as military values such as discipline, collectivism, self-sacrifice and hierarchy guide society towards political loyalty (Bækken, 2019). The traditionalist worldview contains nostalgia and historical memory, which both lean on the prestige of the Russian military. Young people are expected to respect the older generations by embracing this nostalgia and participating in a similar patriotic education that older generations did.

One task of Ûnarmiâ is participating in the 'revitalization of historical information space', where 'the Western nations practice total confrontation' (Tonkoškurov, 2016). This 'revitalization' is more a tool than a concept: schools' history textbooks are being revamped and the regime tries to block false information about the Second World War on the internet. As the military periodical *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* put it, 'the enemy wants to tarnish the most beloved memory of the Russian people – the Great Patriotic War. Its main target group is youth, and through the mass media, it strikes a wedge between generations. In the fight against this special attention must be paid to develop the Ûnarmiâ' (Mišina, 2019). *Izvestiâ* writes that 'Russia needs an active, total, offensive and patriotic historical policy that encompasses everything – the family, kindergarten, schools, universities, as well as cinema, the internet, the media and literature' (Il'nickij, 2015). *Nezavisimaâ gazeta* explains the relationship between the armed forces and historical memory in patriotic education by writing that 'the Russian armed forces need only citizens, who can consciously defend state interests, which is possible only if they haven't lost their historical memory' (Odnokolenko, 2016).

Enemy images in military-patriotic education context follow the Kremlin's general threat-based political climate, which is discussed in more detail earlier in this volume (see Pynnöniemi, Chapter 4, and Laine, Chapter 3). My material reveals the kind of threats that are seen to exist specifically against youth. The biggest and the most abstract and uncontrolled threat is 'globalization', which in patriotic rhetoric means mainly Western values and the uncontrollable internet, giving the word merely negative

connotations. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, 'Globalization is leading to the displacing national mass culture and replacing personal communication between people by electronic communications. It has given birth to nationalist sentiments, which sometimes cross the line of national identity and turn into national chauvinism that requires a consistent fight with fascist ideas' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017b). The military periodical *Voenno-promyšlennyj kur'er* wants Ûnarmiâ to be the authority in this 'total information confrontation', in order to educate citizens (Ilûŝenko, 2017).

Later the same periodical opens up the enemy image:

> With the help of modern mass media and networks, the NATO and its allies seek to reformat the individual, group and mass consciousness of the Russian population in the way that they need for themselves. Therefore, the main object of defeat and destruction is not people themselves, but certain types of consciousness. Its main target group is youth, and through the mass media, it strikes a wedge between generations. In the fight against this, special attention must be paid to military-patriotic education and the key here is to develop the Ûnarmiâ. (Cygankov, 2019)

Another periodical, *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, goes on the same lines, as, 'because of the complete lack of control on the part of the state and society in terms of ideology, it is necessary to constantly post on social networks photo and video materials covering the work of various patriotic public associations such as Ûnarmiâ' (Astanini, 2016). In summary, Russian military circles' attitude towards the internet and global freedom of communication is reprehensible, and their attempt to limit 'non-traditional' information for young people is clear.

In addition to the fight against the negative effects of globalization, Ûnarmiâ is thought to play a preventive role in maintaining the stability of society. The writers of the journal *Vestnik Akademii Voennykh Nauk* argue that at the federal level the organization is a good weapon in the fight against colour revolutionary ideologies. They write that 'the formation of the correct attitude

of schoolchildren and students to state and municipal authorities can be achieved by organizing joint events, which allow authorities to begin the process of building trust in state at all levels and will help counteract protest moods in the youth environment' (Sasim and Kovalev, 2018). Furthermore, 'democratization processes' in domestic politics are seen as a threat and 'the emergence of a multi-party system creates certain difficulties for modern youth to understand the older generation, that has received patriotic education of Soviet system' (Ministerstvo obrazovaniâ i nauki Rossijskoj Federacii, 2017a). This argument reveals that youth must understand older generations and adapt to them, not vice versa.

In Conclusion: Interpretations and Discussion

This chapter aimed to provide an overview of the re-emergence of military-patriotic education in Russia, and, by deconstructing the state hegemonic discourse, analyse the linguistic ways in which the legitimization of Ûnarmiâ is constructed. I presented five discourses, which strongly overlap and interact. Discourses of *heroism*, *masculinity*, a *beneficial and fun hobby*, *citizen-soldier* and *military traditionalism* approach different audiences and repeat and support the state-led ideology of patriotism. Discourses include a variety of key strategies of legitimization for influencing audiences.

Heroism is the tip of all communication, and it is shared by all actors. In Ûnarmiâ's material, a *beneficial and fun hobby* discourse dominates, naturally because its target audience is minors and their parents. This discourse differs from others in its pragmatism when others are more ideological and abstract. Newspapers and state documents emphasize *citizen-soldier* discourse, and military periodicals stress *military traditionalism*. *Masculinity* cuts across all other discourses but is mainly hidden between the lines as it is such a naturalized initial assumption in society. However, when it mixes with the hobby discourse at the practical level, it becomes visible to the reader.

So, what do these discourses mean in the legitimization process? Reyes (2011) differentiates five key strategies for influencing audiences: emotions (particularly fear), a hypothetical future, rationality, voices of expertise and altruism. Every military-patriotic discourse uses these specific linguistic ways in order to obtain the approval of a particular group.

Emotions are key in the legitimization process because they prepare the audience towards supporting and accepting the proposal of the social actor (ibid.). Fear is the most visible means in military traditionalism discourse: upcoming war, internal disruption, the decay of the West, the loss of traditional values and lazy youth arouse fear. Emotions are also in use when the speaker and audience are in the 'us-group' and the social actors described negatively form the 'them-group' (ibid.). This division is rooted deeply in military-patriotic rhetoric. Ûnarmiâns are represented as 'best patriots' – they dedicate themselves to ideology, give their time and publicly demonstrate their commitment. I like to argue that threats that Ûnarmiâ is expected to respond to have slightly changed over the past five years. At the time of the establishment of movement, the threats were mostly perceived as external. Over the past years, talk of patriots and liberals as opposing groups has increased in the military-patriotic context, so the meaning of 'them' has changed from external to internal, which may mean that the response to external threats is already at the required level, or that internal problems have increased in society. Nostalgia also strongly affects emotions. Soviet nostalgia, traditional values and the older generation's own experiences of (militarized) youth are present in many discourses. Nostalgia hits the emotions of the older generation, while young people are offered excitement as an emotion, mostly in the beneficial and fun hobby discourse. Emotions, especially fear, are often naturally used with *a hypothetical future*: if we do not act as we suggest, there will be a war/decay/demographic crisis etc.

It is a matter of *rationality* when political actors present the legitimization process as a process where decisions have been made after a heeded, evaluated and thoughtful procedure (Reyes,

2011). This strategy cuts the whole hegemonic discourse, where the proposed measures are effectively naturalized at the language level. Military-patriotic education is presented as an only rational way to act in the current situation. The grounds for this are sought from a long continuum and history of military-patriotic education, giving the impression that things have been studied and prepared for a long time. *Voices of expertise* is related to this. Military patriotism is driven by the most influential figures in society. From the researcher's perspective, there is a lack of credible scientific research of military-patriotic education, and this vacuum is filled by 'experts by experience' in various fields. Sports heroes, celebrities and veterans represent this strategy in communication targeted at young people.

Ûnarmiâ's activities include helping the poor, veterans and orphans. Social media reports on these events prominently, but it seems that helping is individual acts or events rather than constant collaboration. This leads us to the last legitimization strategy, *altruism*, which justifies its rationale from other people's well-being. Doing things for others, especially for the poor and vulnerable, is well-perceived in society and can help the process of justification (ibid.).

In summary, discourses and legitimization strategies work simultaneously to get different audiences interested and accept the actions of military-patriotic education. If we summarize what the aim of each discourse is, then, according to *military traditionalism*, Ûnarmiâ's purpose is a revitalization of historical information space and preparing citizens for the army. *Citizen-soldier* discourse wants to raise patriotic and loyal citizens. *Heroism* encourages self-sacrifice and heroism – to take risks for the Fatherland. *Beneficial and fun hobby* seeks to make youth active, professional and militarized. Lastly, *masculinity* discourse puts pressure on replicating traditional gender and family norms.

However, it is important to keep in mind that behind the official image is youth, whose perceptions of patriotism do not match the experiences of their parents' generation. The generational gap between policymakers and youth is deepening (see Lassila, Chapter 5, this volume). Youth can demonstrate the patriotism

in order to achieve some benefits in working life or enjoy the resources provided by the movement, especially in rural areas, where other hobby opportunities are scarce, but it is hard to say yet whether they will become the patriots desired by the Kremlin in this way. The project is not risk-free either. Military education for young people may increase the amount of aggression and nationalist narratives in society, which may begin to work against the Kremlin. Also, if discourses of confrontation between liberals and patriots intensify and spread to schools, it will not stabilize future society.

Arguments over the legitimization of Ûnarmiâ and military-patriotic education rely heavily on *military traditionalism* and enemy images. Education is seen as an integral part of a historical continuum; in other words, it is normalized at the level of rhetoric. The Pioneer and Komsomol organizations' spirit is strongly present in the goals of harnessing the whole generation under uniform patriotic education. Still, this study strengthens the idea that Ûnarmiâ's purpose is to raise patriotic citizens who support the prevailing regime, rather than raise only conscripts. The Russian Orthodox Church sees that national security is based on family and therefore the church plays an important role in the current formation of ideology and gender roles to create moral and traditional nuclear families. The Kremlin hopes that this patriotic force may in the future be used to curb and silence colour revolutions and the rise of opposition and prevent their subsequent emergence as young people at risk of radicalization and oppositional thoughts are recruited at an early age in the movement. This claim of Ûnarmiâ as a tool of domestic policy is supported by the large involvement of girls, who are not subject to general conscription, the movement's systematic infiltration into the school world and the growing rhetoric of liberals as 'others'.

Notes

[1] Vserossijskoe voenno-patriotičeskoe obŝestvennoe dviženie 'Ûnarmiâ'. Research material can also be found under the names Yunarmiya, Yunarmia and Yunarmy.

[2] Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation and Navy. See Svynarenko's Chapter 8 in this volume about the definition and purpose of DOSAAF.

[3] The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, commonly known as Cheka, was the first in a succession of Soviet secret police organizations.

[4] The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs was the interior ministry of the Soviet Union 1934–1946, which included both ordinary public order activities and secret police activities.

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CHAPTER 10

Why Did the Seamen Have to Die?

The *Kursk* Tragedy and the Evoking of Old Testament Blood Sacrifice

Elina Kahla

Abstract

This chapter addresses church–state collaboration in the context of 'spiritual national defence'; it compares different views represented in cultural productions on the tragedy of the submarine *Kursk*, which sank in the Barents Sea on 12 August 2000. It suggests that the Russian secular leadership's reluctance to deal with the management of the past, especially concerning the punishment of Stalinist oppressors, is compensated by glorifying victims – here, the seamen of the *Kursk* – having died on duty, as martyrs. The glorification of martyrs derives from Old Testament theology of blood sacrifice (2 Moses 24:8) and makes it possible to commemorate Muslim martyrs together with Orthodox Christian ones. Some theologians have claimed that Russia had needed these sacrifices to spiritually wake up in the post-atheist vacuum

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of values, and that the Russian people had to repent for having abandoned their forefathers' Christian faith. In this line of apologetics of blood sacrifices and need to repent, the New Testament's promise of Jesus' complete purgation and redemption of sin through perfect sacrifice (Matt. 26:28) is not mentioned. My reading elaborates on the commemorative album *Everlasting Lamp of Kursk* by (then) Hegumen Mitrofan (Badanin) (2010), as well as on the drama film *Kursk* by Danish director Thomas Vinterberg, whose film illustrates pan-European visions, based implicitly on the New Testament promise.

Keywords: submarine *Kursk*; cultural production; dying on duty; blood sacrifice; martyrdom; Old Testament, New Testament

Introduction

The geostrategic importance of the Kola Peninsula is compounded by the presence of both the complex of the Northern Fleet (NF) units and servicing industries and the elites of the Russian federal nuclear science. The high gain–high risk military industry makes the news from time to time. In August 2019, the testing of a nuclear-powered cruise missile SSC-X-9 Skyfall (in Russian: Burevestnik) led to an explosion, killing five scientific specialists and two military officials and to a brief spike in radiation levels in Severodvinsk. The federal administration, as usual, praised the victims as national heroes; meanwhile, anxious residents stocked up on iodine (Novaâ gazeta, 2019; Reuters, 2019). A month before, 14 sailors had died in a fire aboard a nuclear-powered submarine in the Barents Sea. Initially, officials refused to comment on the accident, but a top naval official later said that the men had given their lives preventing a 'planetary catastrophe' (Time, 2019).

News of the submarine fire echoed the worst post-Soviet naval disaster, the sinking of the Oscar II multi-purpose missile attack submarine K-141, the *Kursk*, on 12 August 2000 in the Barents Sea, killing the entire crew of 118. The disaster raised unprecedented attention both in Russia and worldwide, ultimately leading to reforms in the Russian navy. It also signposted the new

start of collaborations between the Russian government and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), reviving tsardom traditions. This collaboration gradually normalized and came to be characterized by the term 'spiritual national defence' (Pravoslavnaâ narodnaâ gazeta, 2016; Unian, 2019). In wider society, these developments coincided with growing anti-Western sentiments and a conservative turn (Voices from Russia, 2010). This chapter examines the apologetics of dying on duty, a theme that actualized in the aftermath of the *Kursk* disaster and inspired authors of cultural productions. This reading of several cultural productions explored how heroes who died on duty are commemorated – from a theological-doctrinal perspective as well as in the frame of memory politics. Specifically, the chapter is about interpreting war as a time of divine punishment and human redemption, based mostly on Old Testament prophesies like that of Elijah (Bianchi, 2010, pp. 26–35; Pravoslavie.Ru, 2015; Zobern, 2014). My thesis is that, in Russian cultural productions on the tragedy of *Kursk*, Old Testament blood sacrifice overrules Jesus' singular sacrifice of the New Testament, a theme that underlies 'pan-European' or pan-Christian cultural productions on the same topic.

Dying on Duty as an Act of National Redemption

In the closed community of the Vidyaevo Naval Base, rumours about the fate of the *Kursk* spread quickly by word of mouth and soon seeped out to then-independent media (RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2019).[1] Video clips revealed the rage of NF officers and their families in an unprecedented way. These people were patriotic defenders of the Motherland, long frustrated with humiliatingly poor living conditions, unpaid salaries and a corrupt military bureaucracy. Meeting them face to face in Vidyaevo was the first PR test for the newly elected President Vladimir Putin, an unprecedented move that provoked deep-seated feelings. Pondering over the disaster as an act of national redemption 10 years on, Mitrofan, the former NF naval officer, later hegumen and metropolitan, wrote, 'Why did we need the tragedy of Kursk? What sins were washed over these days by streams of tears that

millions of Russians shed at television screens?' (Mitrofan, 2010, p. 72). In Mitrofan's apologetic writing, from an insider's theological-apocalyptical viewpoint, Russia had needed the sacrifices to be spiritually woken up. The lost lives served as acts to redeem sins by blood sacrifice, following the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament (2 Moses 24:8). In his writing, the New Testament's promise of Jesus' complete purgation and redemption of sin through perfect sacrifice (Matt. 26:28) is not discussed.

I argue that referring here to an Old Testament apocalyptic purge complies implicitly with the high Stalinist practice of political cleansing; at the very least, the decision to employ such a religious reference has the effect of obfuscating the otherwise conspicuous lack of publicly organized secular memory politics in a state with a prominent totalitarian past (i.e. a history of repression). Instead of secular mechanisms being allowed to process history, church–state and church–military collaborate to do so, emulating tsar-time models. The clergy thus frame dying on duty as blood sacrifices, appealing to citizens to carry out redemption practices without holding the secular leadership accountable for its errors or crimes. This simulates the practice of the past, while tsars as sovereigns anointed by God were not supposed to repent to anyone but God. Rather, as practices at the Solovetsk Islands and other memorial sites demonstrate, the clergy pray for the dead souls without even addressing the issue of culpability. 'There are two memories competing there', wrote Arsenij B. Roginskij, chairman of the Memorial organization, founded in 1989 to examine Stalin-era crimes. 'Our memory is looking for who is guilty, and the church is not. The state feels safe passing this memory to the church' (The New York Times, 2015).

However, alongside the Russian civil and military officialdom and wider public, one would point to a third perspective: the non-Russian, represented here via cultural productions, which can be understood as effective vehicles of soft power. In 2018, the Danish film director Thomas Vinterberg released a catastrophe genre fictional film based on broadcast journalist Robert Moore's bestseller *A Time to Die: The Untold Story of the Kursk Disaster* (2002). Vinterberg explores interestingly the same question of the

apologetics of death on duty as Mitrofan but from an outsider's/non-Russian, transnational ('Central European') premise. In this analysis, I explore what aspects of apologetics of dying on duty Russian vs. non-Russian productions highlight, discussing their commonalities and emphasizing their contrasts. Do these cultural productions add something new to our understanding of national models for dying on duty, or of underlying idiosyncrasies like church–state symphony, and coping with them in their world of escalating mutual dependencies?

Everlasting Lamp of the Kursk

The illustrated album *Everlasting Lamp of the Kursk*, dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the events of 12 August 2000, was published in 2010 to commemorate the victims and explore the theological-mystical meaning of the disaster. The author, Mitrofan (Badanin), is an influential actor in the region and a prolific writer; since March 2019, he has been metropolitan of the Murmansk and Monchegorsk diocese. His oeuvre deals with theological, historical and (auto)biographical topics. He had a long career in the NF, but, due to systemic collapse, changed from one hierarchical patriotic institution into another. Shortly before the accident of the *Kursk*, Mitrofan was ordained a hieromonk and posted to the remote village of Varzuga, on the coast of the White Sea, tasked with reviving and organizing the Orthodox faith in the post-atheist village, ancient cradle of Christianity. At this time, Mitrofan also began to research topics related to the history of the region, publishing works on its medieval saints, like Trifon of Pechenga, Feodorit of Kola and Varlaam of Keret.

Vladyka Mitrofan wrote that life looked very different in the periphery, where Soviet years had all but annihilated religious traditions vis-à-vis in metropolises. In 2000, for instance, in Moscow, the ROC celebrated the canonization of a large number of victims of atheist purges, including the tsar family, as martyrs. The religious renaissance accompanied a triumphant state–church symphony, with President Putin and Patriarch Alexy II kissing each other. In contrast to this pomp and optimism, those outside

the upper echelons of society languished under systemic anomy and the loss of moral values as a result of drastic systemic collapse, which had opened up national markets to swindlers, astrologers and strong men's tyranny. Aleksey Zvyagintsev's film *Leviathan* (2014), shot in the Murmansk diocese, on the coast of Teriberka, is key to understanding the material and spiritual agony of local inhabitants. Another film, *72 Meters*, by Vladimir Hotinenko (2004), also alludes to the catastrophe of the *Kursk* and the humiliation of the periphery.

The backdrop of agony, leading to anomy, is salient also in Mitrofan's album. He starts with a quote from 'The Girl Sang in a Church Choir', a poem by Alexander Blok, the Silver Age poet, that ends with the following lines: 'And sweet was her voice and the sun beams around / And only, by Holy Gates / high on the vault, / The child, versed into mysteries, mourned / because none of them will be ever returned.'[2] The quote is chosen not only for its content but also its symbolic date, 12 August (1905), coinciding with the *Kursk* disaster. In Orthodox Church tradition, the coincidence of commemorative calendar dates conveys symbolic, multilayered messages. Here, too, it provides a symbolic key to a taboo memory. As Mitrofan indicates, the sinking of the *Kursk* was a sign by God, warning of the looming apocalypse. People's reaction to this tragedy, he continues, was also incomparable with any other such tragedy, even if there had been quite many of them. Even 10 years later, people were still praying and commemorating the sailors by name. Mitrofan (2010, p. 5) explains the mystery – as he sees it – that it 'cannot be rationally explained otherwise, only by an everlasting spiritual need, a command of the heart and an order by God'. Mitrofan also refers to the many prophetic omens of the time, like that by Vanga, a popular soothsayer, who foretold that 'the Kursk would sink and all will die' (ibid., p. 7).

Stalinist bloodshed seen as blood sacrifice

The most important words Vladyka Mitrofan heard were by academician Dmitri Likhachev, the revered intellectual and former convict of the Solovetsk Gulag, who shortly before his death said:

> I am deeply convinced that the revival of Russia will begin from the North. … The whole North is soaked with blood. So many martyrs –it cannot fail to bear fruit. A renaissance can only happen in blood: 'there is no forgiveness without bloodshed.' That is the Law. (Mitrofan, 2010, p. 9)

I interpret Likhachev's above words as an attempt to discover the deeper meaning of the systemic collapse, by way of combining his own witnessing of martyrdom with traditional lines of Russian Orthodox religious thought. Likhachev was known as a courageous civil activist, who noted publicly that the oppressors still went unpunished. In this context, it is clear that by 'martyrs' Likhachev did not mean here only pious Christian individuals but rather a larger, heterogeneous category of people who, because of arbitrary accusations, ended up as fodder for the Stalinist meat grinder. The category of martyrs is vague for many reasons – who has the right to define the term, for instance, or conduct research on it, accessing the state's secret archives? The inability to define Soviet martyrdom in unambiguous terms reveals the painful problem of memory politics. On the same theme, 'the whole North' denotes the Archipelago Gulag, where, between 1929 and 1953, 18 million people suffered, 2–3 million of whom disappeared entirely. Even if Russians as a whole are aware of the experience of survivors of the Great Terror, there is no public consensus on how to manage this collective trauma. The NKVD archives were open to public access for only approximately 10 years, until 2003. Since then, along with the growing authority of the Federal Security Service, archive research and civil debate on memory politics have been under strict control, whereby the church has been commissioned to commemorate the victims of the Great Terror as martyrs but not to blame the authorities.

In light of these post-2003 developments, Likhachev's quote on the link between bloodshed and forgiveness deserves further elaboration. In the Bible, it is written that 'almost all things are by the law purged with blood' (Hebr. 9:22). Did Likhachev mean that the Mosaic practice of redeeming sins through blood martyrs would be acceptable today? Was he hinting that this should be the practice to follow, prompting Mitrofan (and subsequently the

reader) to consider whether it would be acceptable to justify loss of life on duty by glorifying the victims as martyrs? Is the promotion of such a martyrdom cult an attempt to undermine appeals for reconciliation projects, comparable to Holocaust-related projects of truth and reconciliation? Why did Likhachev not mention the New Testament's promise of Jesus' complete sacrifice? In the modern Russian-language Tolkovaâ Bibliâ, in the notes to Hebrews 9:22[3] an interpretation by Church Father John Chrysostom on Evangelist Matthew is provided (Chrysostom, In: Migne ser. graec. t. 57–58.): 'Nearly everything? Why this restriction? Because there was no perfect forgiveness of sins, but a semi-perfect [*polusoveršennoe*] and even much less, but here we have it. … He says, This is my blood of the [Covenant], which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:28, NRSV).

I would assume that Likhachev's last greetings to Russian church hierarchs indeed point to the unresolved problem of memory politics in a state with a totalitarian past. There are no attempts made towards reconciliation by the powerholders and even less towards the preaching of the universal promise of redemption in the New Covenant. Rather, sticking with the Old Testament blood sacrifice concept converges with the concept of the holy war among Muslim fundamentalists, naming those outside *ummah* as adversaries. Take another example. The contemporary, populist Russian Orthodox author Vladimir Zobern (2014, p. 178) wrote that, when talking about 'monster Germans', one should not speak also of Christ's Commandment, since 'they are not only our, but God's enemies'. Zobern's demonization of post-Auschwitz Germans reasserts the categorization as holy war that the Second World War still holds onto. Carleton (2017, pp. 108–109) correctly notes, in his analysis of the film *The Great Patriotic War*, that Russians may take initiatives like the '2008 EU edict against Stalinism and Nazism' as 'an attempt to form a new pan-European identity' at the expense of their own national identity. That is, many Russians consider the blood sacrifices by Russians/Soviets related to the Second World War to exceed all of its Western allies' sacrifices; therefore, any, especially 'pan-European', attempt to relativize this sacrifice is met with national outrage. Meanwhile, for the

mainstream ROC hierarchs, it has become all the more convenient to interpret the Second World War as God-sent punishment for Russians for their abandonment of their fathers' faith (Bogumil and Voronina, 2020).

Apologetics for laying down one's life for one's friends

The album's next section, 'Sea', relates old proverbs on the need to be constantly vigilant of the dangers of the sea. 'It is scary for a man on the sea, for he is standing before the sea, as before the Lord Himself', Mitrofan (2010, p. 21) writes, for 'greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15:13), a quote frequently engraved as an epitaph on the graves of fallen soldiers in Russia. Dying in action the author equates with inheriting the Heavenly Kingdom: 'the Kursk went into oblivion for us to return from oblivion', Mitrofan writes, and praises the tsar-time spiritual traditions revered in the navy, implicitly suggesting that negligence of such traditions prove fatal. He then repeats the biblical quote 'and almost all things are by the law purged with blood' (Hebr. 9:22). Now the New Testament is also present, as Mitrofan equates the loss of one's relatives with Jesus' loss, when Lazarus died and Jesus wept (John 11:35): 'therefore our vast land wept also, suddenly having recognized itself as one united nation, having that moment become one family', Mitrofan writes, adding that the added cohesiveness of Russian society was one positive consequence of the disaster (Mitrofan, 2010, pp. 27, 61).

The section 'There is no death …' is on the eternal nature of the soul. It includes a list of the names of all 118 deceased submariners, a photo collage with funeral prayers, and both official and private gestures of mourning. The subsequent section, 'Forever', then focuses on individual stories of some of the victims. Captain Vladimir Bagriantsev's widow commemorates his life and his turning to Christ, alongside a photo of his baptismal cross, warped by the explosion. This section includes an intriguing description about the official commemoration of the 118 seamen, which started with the erection of a church in Vidyaevo, at the patriarch and president's order. The diocese commissioned

icons with portraits of the sailors in the frames of a two-sided commemorative icon, 'Our Lady of Kursk'. This project was not without controversy, however, as some people thought it would be about canonizing the sailors as saints. Alas, that was not the idea; in Orthodox iconography, it is possible to include uncanonized persons' stylized portraits in the picture's frames, or *kleima*. In this case, an icon-painter and another artist painted the sailors dressed in white robes. The initiative of this painting goes back to Hegumen Daniil of Pechenga monastery, who, in his dream, saw one of the submariners in white robes, sopping 'as if from the font'. Daniil interpreted his dream as a message from God to confirm Bishop Simon's (Pravoslavnyj portal, 2018) observation about the men: 'They were baptized in the sea water of their martyrdom.' In the central part of the four icons are the portraits of Our Lady of the Sign and Christ Almighty, as well as of Nicholas Wonderworker and Prince Vladimir. Why those two saints? Traditionally, Saint Nicholas is the protector of sailors and travellers, whereas Saint Vladimir epitomizes the righteous prince, baptizer of the Fatherland and visionary ruler, in service of whom the sacrifices were made (ibid.). Naturally, the common first name alludes also to the symbolic tie between the medieval Prince Vladimir of Kiev and present-day President Vladimir, whose heavenly protector Vladimir of Kiev is.

In the section 'Iconoclasm', the author defends the decision to depict the seamen in *kleima*. Many had opposed their iconization, arguing that several of the seamen were not even baptized Christians. 'One could paint them based on love only, not based on truth', however, Mitrofan (2010, p. 69) argues, admitting the inadequacy of theological apologetics. In the final pages of the book, a list of all 118 first names are given again, now in the *sinodik*, or list of prayer. The last names in the list denote their non-Christian background (among them Ruslan, Rashid, Abdulkadyr, Fanis, Nail, Rishat, Solovat, Murat, Mamed) without commentary. The church obviously wished to commemorate the crew as a seamless unity, as equal martyrs killed on duty, accomplishing this through iconography and prayers but leaving ambiguous how martyrdom related to dying on duty in times of peace. It is worth noting,

however, that the relative share of Muslim soldiers is increasing in the Russian army and navy, and that it is vital not to discriminate against them. Furthermore, the high value of a martyr's death is one of the uniting components between Orthodox Christian and Islamic thought.

In sum, Mitrofan interprets the coinciding events in a mystifying way: 'when, after ploughing the seabed, the underwater missile cruiser laid a bloody boundary, marking the limit of the spiritual degradation of the Russian people, after this … in Moscow it marked a line under the Russian history of the 20th century'. The author thus draws a chronological and substantial connection between the tragedy and the biggest ever canonization ceremony of new martyrs. 'The Church, on the part of the whole nation, glorified those who, with their martyr's death stood in the way of the godless authorities and asked for all of us the forgiveness of sin for deviating from the faith of their fathers.' (Mitrofan, 2010, p. 69).

Lewdness and promiscuity: the enemy within

The author continues his apocalyptical apologetics of the tragedy in the section 'Boundary': 'the country, who used to call herself Holy Rus', turned to ridicule and fornication', he writes, and quoting Ezekiel 23:29–31:

> They will deal with you in hatred and take away everything you have worked for. They will leave you stark naked, and the shame of your prostitution will be exposed. Your lewdness and promiscuity have brought this on you, because you lusted after the nations and defiled yourself with their idols. (Mitrofan, 2010, p. 73)

The quote from Ezekiel matches the sociological notion of anomy. Having recovered the corpses in 2001, the authorities decided to bury the majority of them in the St Petersburg cemetery Serafimovskoe, dedicated to those killed on duty. At the ceremony, the local priest did not hide his emotions, blaming the seamen's wives for the accident. The wives were guilty of not waiting for their husbands to come back from the sea, for not loving them enough

or sharing in their hardships. He spoke of the moral degradation of the modern man, the degradation of the relationship between husband and wife. Accompanying the elderly priest's homily, but on a more positive tone, Mitrofan quotes Konstantin Simonov's legendary wartime lyrics: 'Wait for me.' Each naval officer hopes that his wife would pray for him, Mitrofan writes, and, by so doing, save his life. He quotes the final verses by Simonov: 'How I survived, will know / Only you and me, / You just knew how to wait / Like no one else' (Mitrofan, 2010, p. 75). Not surprisingly, the popular songwriter Yuri Shevchuk's lyrics on the *Kursk* implicitly echo Simonov: 'I know … there is no salvation, but if you believe … wait, you will find my letter on your chest' (GL5.ru, 2019, p. 5).

As an attempt to characterize the strength of spiritual life – no matter what form it takes, as the popular lyrics testify – as well as the need to point out whom to blame, and where modern man's alleged degradation stems from, these examples are striking. Blame the wives! – for not loving, not praying. Mitrofan (2010, pp. 75–77) suggests that God's punishment in the form of bloodshed results from the collective sins that results from modern man's own degradation, unrelated to any external threat. Mitrofan does not blame Westerners; on the contrary, he includes the prayers sent to Vidayaevo as a sign of consolation and solidarity by the wives of British submariners of the Royal Navy. The hand-stitched poem–prayer tapestry consists of exactly 118 English words, commemorating each soul lost in the tragedy. Mitrofan's commentary here is emotional: 'What an important example for our families!' The prayer is sincere, of universal Christian-religious content, with the refrain 'O hear us when we cry to Thee / for those in peril on the sea!' (ibid.).

The leadership's role and asking for forgiveness

The apologetics of the catastrophe develop further in the description of the official aftermath, including the decisive role of Admiral Popov of the NF, who, against the wishes of his superiors, considered accepting aid from his counterpart in the NATO forces.

Mitrofan emphasizes that no person involved in the *Kursk* accident remained as he had been before the accident. Popov, too, 'let all suffering go to his heart, resigned from his post', and 'the Lord took pity on him and allowed him to live on'. Focusing on only Popov's role in the accident and his agony over six pages, Mitrofan avoids blaming the leadership in charge. Likewise, there are no comments on the reasons for Popov's resignation. The section 'Commander' cites the admiral's speech before the submariners' families, ending with the words:

> Nowhere is there such equality before fate, as in the crew of a submarine, where all either are defeated or die. Grief has come, but life goes on. Raise your children, raise your sons. And forgive me. For not saving your men. (Mitrofan, 2010, p. 93)

Asking humbly for forgiveness is all but impossible for a Russian admiral, yet Popov does so, at the minute of resignation. According to Mitrofan, people sent their letters of support to Admiral Popov, while blaming the news agencies for spreading hate and filth. There were also other signs of sympathy, that is, local people supported the local navy administration. Importantly, on the monument dedicated to victims of peaceful times – especially to victims of the *Kursk* – which uses the salvaged hull of the sub in the harbour of Murmansk, there is attached an icon of Admiral Fedor Ušakov. This icon, as a local Murmansk dweller put it (Pravoslavie.Ru, 2006), represents the paragon of a righteous admiral 'who protected his own men'.

Concluding remarks on Mitrofan's apologetics: the challenge of diversity

The religious resurgence in Russia, which started in 1988 with the millennial celebration of the baptism of Rus' and ended with the institutionalization of church–state collaboration today, has resulted in a rich repertoire on retelling national history, as I have discussed above. Nevertheless, replacing the vacuum that

state atheism had left behind was not a smooth process. The state turned to the ROC to help define and disseminate the national agenda, whereas the church lacked resources and educated clergymen (Kirill, 2012). After 70 years of isolation, theological education lagged behind, and the church found itself in an uneasy, softly speaking, position. To blame the church for being antiquated or ineloquent would therefore be reductive. As the case of the *Kursk* demonstrates, the clergy's reaction in blaming the sailors' allegedly unfaithful wives instead of military leadership and, in more general terms, the apologetics of blood sacrifices implicitly continue the unquestioned practice of respecting the oath of allegiance and, ultimately, self-sacrifice. This has been the common practice of the country, which, according to Stalinist standards, was order Nr. 270, or 'not a step back'. Furthermore, the use of explicit religious rhetoric in a modern state military one may interpret as a kind of strategics-level theocratization, as Dima Adamsky (2019, p. 244) suggests in his comparative analysis of a model of 'Military Theocratization' in various countries.

I would suggest that, according to the *Everlasting Lamp*'s political-theological apologetics, the quote '[In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and] without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness' (Hebr. 9:22, NIV) indeed serves as an explicit illustration of 'military theocratization'. In Mitrofan's apologetics, however, it is much less about strategics-level thinking and more about giving voice to the local community's attempts to cope with and make sense of the tragedy, like referring to bad omens: 'when the sub was baptized, the champagne bottle was broken not by the right person'. Mitrofan reminds the reader here of the old tsar-time tradition of baptizing a naval ship. It consisted of a prayer service, including the rite of blessing the water and then sprinkling this water on the naval jack. As part of the ceremony, the ship received its own guardian icon. On the annual name day of that guardian saint, a liturgy would be held, and 'every single member of the crew from captain to the last cabin boy would take part in Holy Communion', Mitrofan (2010, pp. 88–89) writes. He hints, again, here that the national catastrophe was the result of Russia's rejection of their

fathers' faith and tradition. Respectively, commemoration of the new martyrs highlights their blood sacrifice as a gesture of collective atonement.

To conclude, some words on the problem of reviving old tsar-time traditions in the NF. First, even if Mitrofan does not mention it, the ship was indeed baptized in March 1995 in the docks of Vidayavo. Every sailor received as a gift a small icon of St Nicholas, and the priest sprinkled holy water on the naval jack, with the ceremony culminating in the priest's handing over to the fleet command a copy of the 12th-century icon of Our Lady of Kursk. The tradition was respected; a *moleben* (prayer service) was delivered. Even if the clergy had serviced the divine liturgy, not all the seamen would have taken part in the Holy Communion, as not many of them were Orthodox Christians, let alone were churchened [*otserkovleny*]. This situation seems to be related with the repeated demand for blood sacrifice in the Old Covenant to the singular sacrifice in the New Covenant – that is, Jesus' promise of the perfect forgiveness of sins through the Eucharist. I argue that, when speaking about the resurgence of church–military collaboration in today's Russia, this is one of the most prominent unresolved question: in a multi-confessional community, not every member can participate in one Holy Communion service; there must be arrangements for diversity (Ortodoksiviesti, 2019). In wider societal terms, when the Russian state leadership is not willing to undergo a redemptive process and apologize, does it prevent the ROC as well? Is it that church–state collaboration has bound the church to the Mosaic Law, thus admitting it is not living up to spiritual standards but of standards of the flesh?

Is this question worth exploring? My thesis is that the failure to deliver a theology concerning the new martyrs indeed underlies a fundamental problem in church–state collaboration in Russia. As the example above indicates, demanding blood sacrifices reflects the multifaith situation, but does not help to resolve the problem of a totalitarian legacy. One might also ask, who may be included in the category of new Soviet-era martyrs – Orthodox believers, other believers like Muslims, and atheists – since all of them have fulfilled their duty in service of the Motherland? What

the commemoration of the multifaith and atheist victims of the *Kursk* testifies is that being faithful to the national cause until death is respected above all, in war and peace, and civil religion is what counts, whereas one's private religion does not.

The Drama Film *Kursk*

Western value of 'unity in plurality' vs. Russian rejection of foreign aid

At the Toronto film festival in fall 2018, an interviewer asked Danish director Thomas Vinterberg what his biggest challenge was in making the film *Kursk*. He replied:

> Knowing that we had to make an English-language film that takes place in Russia was a big challenge; it was the biggest challenge on the movie, in fact, and a challenge that at one point made me consider whether to make the film or not. So I decided to consider it a specific challenge in that I would have to make it as truthful as possible, and then it became a question of accents as well. So I thought if I mix very British accents or American accents with Matthias Schoenaerts' Central European accent, it's going to be too complicated, so I went for Central European, which then tends to be a little bit German and a little bit Danish here and there. I made that decision to try to control this impossible thing with 108 speaking parts and with actors from different countries. (Cineuropa, 2018)

Vinterberg's notion of revealing artistic truths by mixing 'Central European' accents is thrilling. The use of a lingua franca conveys an illusion of the universality of the crew and adds to the artistic estrangement. As the focus of the drama film is bravery and sacrifice under extreme circumstances, much depends on the viewer's reception of its authenticity. In the same vein, clunky dialogue, or stereotypical patterns of behaviour, underscore the dissociation from the normal and the everyday, intensifying the apocalyptic presentiment of looming death.

An international film production based on a true, traumatizing story taking place in contemporary Russia is necessarily an external intervention into the sphere of national and military sensitivities. Unsurprisingly, in the post-2014 situation, the Russian administration forbade shooting the film within the Russian Federation. Finally, after suspending negotiations, Toulon, France, replaced Vidyaevo of the Kola Peninsula. Financed by European Union (EU) member states (France, Belgium, Luxemburg), with a budget of $40 million, the cultural production incarnates a vision of pan-European identity, including the value of 'unity in plurality'. Vinterberg's production glorifies these identities, focusing on brotherhood of crewmanship in a catastrophe.

The film's point of departure is national disaster, but the threat in question (i.e. nuclear explosion), or a 'second Chernobyl', as one of the sailors in the film notes, is one of global significance, implying that neither the Russian government nor Russians as a nation have a monopoly over the film's topic. In fact, the film *Kursk* deals with the challenge of managing mutual dependence, requiring the ability for and willingness of national powers to collaborate effectively. As the plot indicates, only the starting point is a national problem. The film depicts the survivors of a society at the 'end of history' (F. Fukuyama), the victory of capitalism over the outdated state socialism, and explores a situation where the state Leviathan threw her citizens into the abyss of financial and moral bankruptcy, into anomy – as discussed earlier. Russian military capabilities also weakened substantially. As many may remember from the 1990s, Greenpeace anti-nuclear activists, the Norwegian Bellona group and the world media even disseminated pictures of rusting radioactive Soviet-era military trash from the NF.

The film's opening scene hints at this depressing starting point and the anticipation of yet another, larger catastrophe at hand. Since the true story is well known, the viewer is expected to contemplate why the crew of the *Kursk* had to die in a time not of war but of peace. Why did the military administration refuse to accept foreign rescue aid, a common practice at sea? Who was responsible for the decisions made surrounding the disaster?

Collective bravery and sacrifice: Kolesnikov

I will next explore Vinterberg's depiction of the bravery and sacrifice expected of the seamen of the *Kursk*. In the main role of the film is Captain Lieutenant Kalekov, whose prototype is Captain Lieutenant Dmitri Kolesnikov, who takes charge of the 23 survivors in the 9th Compartment after the explosion. The name Kalekov hints at the meaning of 'cripple', stemming from the word *kaleka*. Kolesnikov, in contrast, stems from *koleso*, or wheel. The hint may ring a bell to a Russian-speaking audience. The original Kolesnikov may also ring a bell thanks to the famous 'letter by Captain Kolesnikov', found on the corpse in the submarine, posthumously turning him into a national martyr-hero (Wikipedia, 2019a). Kolesnikov's handwritten note testifies to the fact that, after the explosion of the training torpedo, not all of the men instantly perished. They suffered loss of oxygen, struggled for their life and awaited rescue. The note of the 27-year-old captain lieutenant consisted of two parts. One is a love letter to his wife and the other a note to the rest of the world, with the words 'I hope someone will read this'. Kolesnikov's last wish gave birth to a widespread movement. First, it authorized the family members of the seamen and the media to blame the administration for negligence of their duties; second, the tragedy was captured in popular imagination through singer-songwriter Iuri Shevchuk's and the rock band DDT's song 'Captain Kolesnikov'. Shevchuk's lyrics reveal the abyss of tragedy and the disconnect between the political and the intimate. The latter culminates in the song: 'About death, who will tell us a few honest words, / Too bad there's no black boxes for sunken sailors. … After what happened, for a long time they will lie, / Will the Commission tell you how hard it is to die?' (Karaoke.ru, 2019; YouTube, 2009).

As the film script is based on Robert Moore's book *A Time to Die* (2002), its name alone reveals the focus: what it means to die on duty. When the film *Kursk* was released to the public, one could immediately anticipate the bitter sentiment it would trigger in millions of Russians. Any such explicit attempt to propagate the superiority of Western universal values would necessarily have been

received negatively by a Russian audience. In my understanding, *Kursk* succeeds in anticipating this reaction by focusing its praise on the unison, brotherhood and bravery of the crew and the hope that remains for the next generation.

The unison of the crew surfaces early as a leitmotif in the first scenes of the film. Kalekov, the main protagonist, pawns his valuable watch to be able to pay for the beverages at his friend's wedding party. Sacrifice for the sake of one's best friend is the chief symbol of male bonding. 'I know you would do the same for me', Kalekov reassures the bridegroom. The gesture becomes even more poignant when the visual landscapes hint that wages had been unpaid for some time. Collective sacrifice was needed not only to celebrate a wedding but in everyday life, too.

To give away one's watch is a significant symbol in itself. A watch may have been a man's most valuable item, something one gave at one's deathbed or when departing for the battlefront. The symbol of the watch even appears with this latter meaning in a concluding scene in the last minutes of the film. The beverages seller appears again and returns Kalekov's watch to the orphaned son, praising the little boy for his bravery. In the film, the boy refuses to shake hands with the admiral, who, in the eyes of the victims' families, is responsible for the deaths of the seamen. In my reading, the scene epitomizes the legacy passed on to the next generation. Even if the last text of the film is '71 children were orphaned by the catastrophe', in Vinterberg's vision, the little boy's gesture of civic activism seems to emphasize the hope for change to come.

Why must we die?

In an interview, Vinterberg mentions not just the bravery of the crew as his starting point but also the universal question of meaning in death:

> The bravery of these men really struck me. We are all eventually going to run out of time, which is something that bothers me a great deal. My wife, who is an actress in the movie, has just become a priest, and I keep asking her this question, 'Why are

> we going to die?' People don't talk about death any more; they talk about youth and trying to optimise their lives. A few generations ago, we talked about death because people died earlier and dying was part of life. It's not anymore; it's become something we fear, and also it's become something that only literature and films deal with. I felt that this was the ultimate story about running out of time and how you behave when you're in that situation—that moved me, interested me, fascinated me and scared me. This heartbeat—this very civilised, orderly cry for help—it really got me. (Cineuropa, 2018)

The topic of 'running out of time' is a universal theme in the arts. Although the tragedy was a result of mismanagement and negligence of both ecological threats and human lives, its counterweight is the hope that the children of the deceased seamen represent. Even so, Vinterberg's film depicts a tradition that prefers the celebration of martyrs instead of the rescue of the living.

Critics' reactions remained reserved. Elena Lazic expressed her disapproval of the director's decision to omit the explicit naming of political decision-making, that Vladimir Putin is conspicuously absent from the film (Little White Lies, 2018). As for me, I think it is artistically more powerful to point to the bear not by name but by metonymy. The strong arm of the state is revealed in a rapid scene in which the security staff tame a furious woman in the midst of public crowd by injecting her with a sedative. The scene is based on true events, recorded on video, when the president was meeting the family members in Vidyaevo, as I mentioned earlier, with the clip ending up circulating on the internet (YouTube, 2012, 2019). Even today, anyone interested in the story of the once-glorious NF's humiliation revealed to the eyes of the world in the sinking of the *Kursk* will find no shortage of material on the Russian-language internet. In the film dialogue, ironically, the sailors mention that even life-saving equipment was sold to the Americans: 'Now the equipment is located next to the *Titanic*, and serves the tourists.' Furthermore, the film focuses on the collective agony of the whole community of Vidyaevo. They get no official information, only rumours. The crying women meet

a stone-faced admiral with his retinue, who repeats: 'the men have given their oath to sacrifice their life in service of defending their homeland'. There is fundamentally more at stake here than the president's evident white lies.

The film *Kursk* elaborates on the unflinchingly rigid hierarchical order of military command. This is repeated over several episodes: first, when the crew try, but fail, to receive permission to eject a damaged training torpedo to escape a pending disaster, and, second, when the authorities reject timely foreign aid. The respected Admiral Popov, who unofficially contacts his old counterpart in the NATO forces, is subsequently dismissed.

The release of the film in Russia was delayed by six months; the premiere took place only on 27 June 2019 (Wikipedia, 2019b). Before that, viewers could watch pirated copies, and Russian critics saw *Kursk* at the Toronto film festival. Andrei Sharogradski (Radio Svoboda, 2018) anticipated that the Russian viewer would not be offended but rather disappointed by the superficiality of the outcome – that is, how detached the film actors were from the tragedy itself. As he puts it, the Russian band DDT, mentioned earlier in this paper, succeeded much better in their depiction of the tragedy (ibid.). Sharogradski's reaction reflects national sentiment: suspicion of foreigners sticking their noses in the affairs of others. In the same vein, another Russian critic, Tatiana Šorohova giving no credit to the cinematography of the film, checks the film against Russian realities, finding it fake:

> We at the unconscious level analyze the slightest deviations of the image from the person and, as it were, repel a fake. … 'Kursk' is a rare manifestation of the effect of the 'uncanny valley' in the movie. In it, everything seems similar and recognizable, but that is not how it is. … Probably, if domestic cinematographers took up a film about the tragedy in New York in September 2001, the result could be compared with Kursk. (KinoPoisk, 2018)

For scholars of cultural productions, interested in cultural warfare and images of the enemy, *Kursk* offers serious material. The film explores the blurry boundary between a domestic and a global

realm, as well as the deep entrenchment and sophisticated dilemmas of duty and conscience.

Global interdependence vs. diversity of mentalities

Vinterberg's film succeeds in revealing global interdependence, and in touching on universal questions like dying on duty. He also points to the legacy that catastrophes leave for orphaned children and families, who, unlike the soldiers, have not sworn an oath of allegiance. The children of *Kursk* are young adults, collectively shaped by this tragedy, as the children of 9/11. As Shevchuk's lyrics point out, 'Which of us are the same age, who is the hero, who is the schmuck, / Captain Kolesnikov's letter touches us' (Lyricstranslate.com, 2019). Second, *Kursk* explores not only death on duty but death in general. The director is right here: in the West, death is no longer a common topic of discussion – not so in Russia, where the average life expectancy of men dramatically decreased throughout the 1990s, nearing that in Nigeria.

The global level of significance and the sober tone are achieved, in the first place, through artistic estrangement. In real life, the living conditions of the NF families were even much worse, but the point is of course not there. When Sergei Dorenko, the Russian TV reporter, interviewed naval officers of Vidyaevo shortly after the disaster about the unheated flats and unpaid salaries, one of the respondents shrugged his shoulders and replied nonchalantly: 'I do not really know, perhaps we are accustomed, we are Russians, though. … Even if it is cold, there is the warmth of home and of our wives and children. … We would still go out to the sea—the sea will show everything. … The Americans will find it hard to fight us' (Meduza, 2019; YouTube, 2019).

Concluding Remarks

In this comparative reading, I contrasted two cultural products – a photo album by an 'insider' versus a film by an 'outsider' – investigating what implicit answers they provide to the

apologetical question of the *Kursk* disaster: why did the seamen have to die? Both works elaborate not only on secular, historical and national but also on theological, cyclical and global aspects of and underlying the question. Hegumen Mitrofan accentuates the origins of the national process of church–state collaboration in the context of the social anomy of the 1990s. He, like many contemporary Russian theologians, attempts to cope with the collective trauma by referring to Old Covenant theology on blood sacrifices, traditional in the pre-revolutionary context of church–state symphony, but ends up admitting its inadequacy. One would assume that the theology of blood sacrifices would compensate for the lack of secular mechanisms for coping with the totalitarian past, as well as rhetorically apologize for the ongoing practice of framing soldiers and sailors killed in action as martyrs of holy war, defenders of the Eastern Christian faith (like during the operation in Syria). In this frame, recognizing the significance of Christ's singular sacrifice is impossible.

Vinterberg's film, in contrast, creates an illusion of unity among the crew, of individual bravery in unison, to the point of sacrificing one's life. There is no verbal religious rhetoric; however, baptismal crosses can be seen on the sailors' bare chests, and people gathering in church for the blessing of their matrimony and for the commemoration of their deceased serve as strong symbols. In so doing, the film celebrates the universal Christian heritage and tradition; it represents the universal promise of the New Covenant.

As to contrasts between the two cultural productions, Hegumen Mitrofan avoids all criticism of leadership, while Vinterberg addresses its negligence and mismanagement. The gesture of the little orphan, played by a Russian actor (all other actors are non-Russians), of not shaking hands with the 'bad' admiral who rejected foreign aid represents the power of civil opposition. The non-Russian auteur thus points to responsibility of the leadership, while the Russian blames the people for rejecting their fathers' religion, and the wives for their unfaithfulness.

Both artistic visions – one delivered by a European with a $40 million budget and a pan-European cast, the other one by a

Russian insider – have much in common in their imagery of bravery and sacrifice. The film offers a global viewpoint, which I called here 'unity in plurality', and targets a global audience. The Russian vision, in contrast, targets primarily a domestic audience and tries to make sense of the lost lives by canonizing and iconizing them in memory. Seamen dying on duty represent blood sacrifice as an ultimate, but inaccessible, form of deification, an imitatio Christi (*oboženie*). An analogy can be drawn to trauma theory, which suggests that trauma occurs when transcendence becomes impossible. Captain Kolesnikov's question – will anyone (after my death) read this? – illustrates the same deadlock.

My suggestion is that, when the imitation of the outdated model of church–state symphony is unable to meet the realities of mutual dependencies in a multi-confessional environment, powerful artistic contributions can compensate, to some extent, for its deficiencies. There is promise provided by 'unity in plurality' viewpoints, including transnational production teams meeting the reality of multi-ethnic and multi-confessional mutual dependencies. Access to a global audience may also prove helpful; literature takes trauma on board, and so does cinema too. The new generation of Russian theologians may find practical ways to commemorate Orthodox as well as non-Orthodox victims as martyrs, but they cannot compensate for the secular leadership's reluctance to deal with the management of the past. For the time being, therefore, seamen will continue dying and blood sacrifices will be offered.

Notes

[1] In particular, TV reporter Sergei Dorenko, backed by oligarch money, made history with his reports (see RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2019).

[2] Here I refer to the translation by Yevgeny Bonver (2001).

[3] Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebr. 9:22, NRSV). In Russian: Da i vse počti po zakonu očiŝaetsâ krovʾû, i bez prolitiâ krovi ne byvaet proŝeniâ (Lopuhin, 2019).

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CHAPTER 11

Conclusion

Katri Pynnöniemi

This edited volume has examined the nexus of patriotism and militarism in Russia. The set of questions driving this inquiry include the following: is Russia preparing for war? Are the Russians ready to fight? Or are the people growing more, not less, sceptical towards the hype around militaristic patriotism? Who are Russia's enemies or Others identified in this context? To answer these questions, we set out to examine formation of threat perceptions and perceptions of Others in historiography and official foreign and security political discourse, conceptualizations of patriotism in official policies as well as among the general public, and the elements of militarism in contemporary Russia. This concluding section will summarize the main findings of the research and on that basis suggest new topics for further research. To begin with, I will briefly outline the conceptual and theoretical points of departure and offer some thoughts on how to develop them further.

The concept of ontological (in)security offered a loose framework for this multidisciplinary volume. Ontological security

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refers to individual (in terms of psychology) or state (in the context of IR scholarship) psychological resilience, an ability to successfully cope with recurring critical situations that challenge the self-identity and the feeling of being secure. It is argued that this framework is useful in analysing Russia's security discourse that features both a strong sense of physical security, understood in terms of the traditional realist paradigm, and identity-based ontological security. In the case of Russia, the trauma of territorial loss due to the Soviet collapse is a source of perpetual anxiety that generates ontological security-seeking (Kazharski, 2020, p. 25; Torbakov, 2018, p. 186). This feeling of incompleteness has become an integral part of Russia's official story of itself.

On this basis, we argue that Russia's quest for ontological security translates into a set of national narratives and policies (e.g. military-patriotic education) that are used as a resource to strengthen internal cohesion (understood in the sense of ontological security) and a perception of external and internal threats towards Russia. The trauma of the Soviet collapse is used as a 'resource' (Steele, 2008, p. 57) to synthesize Russia's national narrative as perpetual search for a 'historical Russia' in opposition to the current 'incomplete Russia'. This choice brings the country into conflict with its neighbours. Each of these conflicts creates a new trauma that, in turn, increases the feeling of anxiety in society. The propagation of military patriotism offers a channel to manage ontological insecurity (security as being) and, at the same time, strengthen narratives that prepare the society for war (security as survival). In this context, patriotism is interpreted not just as love for your country but as an acceptance of an authoritarian form of government. Militarism, on the other hand, refers both to the acceptance of the use of military force in conflict resolution and the process whereby society is prepared for war.

The analyses conducted in this volume show that this nexus has been strengthened in recent years. We also show that alternative interpretations of patriotism (e.g. intimate patriotism) challenge the official policies and tell the story of Russia anew. It is likely that this friction between official and unofficial perceptions of patriotism will increase in the years to come. We offer some explanations

for this situation, but clearly this is an issue that requires further study. In the following I will briefly summarize the main conclusions of the analysis.

The first part of this volume provides a detailed analysis of enemy images as part of historical narratives and the foreign and security political discourses. The creation and manipulation of enemy images is an effective means to influence society and its individual members, especially at a time of crisis. By manipulating the feelings of enmity and fear, authorities may consolidate society for the purposes of common action. Along with the negative sentiments, positive feelings of pride and belonging can also be used in consolidation of the society and nation. As shown by Kati Parppei in Chapter 2, the medieval perceptions and images of Others have been preserved, albeit in recycled form, and provide a dualistic framing for legitimate action in the conflict. The historical image of an *infidel* archenemy and courageous Russian hero is applied in conflicts with Muslims (from warfare with the Turks to the conflict in Syria).

The inherent dualism of this image (Orthodox Christian Russians versus infidel enemies) has transformed into persistent feature of Russia's national narrative and (popular) historiography, argues Parppei. The polemical writings of Russian philosopher Ivan Il′in offer a good example of this dualism (see Chapter 4 by Katri Pynnöniemi). In fact, Il′in's typology of Russia's enemies is completely dualistic. According to Il′in, Russia is confronted by an arch of enemies who fear and despise her inherent strength and exceptionality. Today, Il′in's ideas are applied and recycled as a part of the conservative turn that sets Russia's future apart from Europe, even as a vanguard of the anti-liberal movement.

As shown by Veera Laine in Chapter 3, the conservative turn has also left its imprint on the presidential addresses (2000–2020). Analysing the image of Others in the presidential speeches, Laine shows how the representation of Others has changed over time. In the early 2000s, the image of a corrupt bureaucrat was framed as a historical and internal Other and used in legitimizing Putin's rule. At the same time, Russia's position in the world was framed in terms of constant economic and political competition. In this

framework, a stronger Western country represented the significant Other. The political transformations in Ukraine in 2004 and again in 2014 were interpreted as a threat to the Russian political system and this opened up a discursive and political space for a conservative turn in Russian politics. Veera Laine's chapter identifies this shift in the presidential addresses. Accordingly, since around the mid-2000s, the Russian state authorities have 'introduced new symbolic policies to stress external threat, and, around the same time, the addresses to the Federal Assembly started to reflect shared values as the key guarantee for it'. It was only later, after 2013, that the values Others had were portrayed as fundamentally different from those of Russia, and, moreover, an argument was made whereby Others had abandoned 'the values that once were common to Russia and Europe'. Since this change has been relatively abrupt – the references to the 'Europeanness' of the Russian values disappeared from presidential discourse between the years 2005 and 2007 – it can be argued that the change in the opposite direction could take place fast. However, taking into account insights from other chapters in this volume, it seems unlikely that this interpretation will be reversed anytime soon. The Russian state authorities invest discursive and political resources into policies that aim to unify the country against external (and internal) threats.

From this perspective, the nexus of patriotism and militarism in contemporary Russia includes elements that seem worrying. The increasing use of enemy images in the Kremlin's strategic communication, the identification of Russia as representative of true Europe, instead of one among the European countries, and the investments made to militarization of the youth are attempts to strengthen Russia's internal cohesion in the event of 'critical situations' (Steele, 2008) or conflicts. As the chapters in in this volume show, the Kremlin's attempts to synthesize Russia's national narrative have brought to fore an image of Others as threats to Russia's ontological security that further contributes to the feelings of trauma and anxiety.

While historical myths and traumas can be repeated in order to foster a sense of ontological state security, there is always an

opportunity to reinterpret these myths and narratives anew. In fact, it is important to emphasize that the Kremlin does not have a complete monopoly on the way in which the story of Russia is told. The young people in particular are frustrated with the top-down interpretation of patriotism and seek to express themselves through participation in networks beyond official state structures. Occasionally, or perhaps increasingly, these activities lead the youth onto a collision course with the state authorities.

We explored this dynamism in the two subsequent parts of this volume. The articles in the second part of the volume show that, instead of only one hegemonic discourse on patriotism, there are a number of ways in which people interpret what patriotism is for them. Thus, notwithstanding the systematic and widespread dissemination of nationalistic discourses and feelings of enmity and exceptionalism, people remain sceptical of official policies and narratives supporting militarized patriotism. As suggested by Mitikka and Zavadskaya, the state's vision of being a patriot has moved from a more inclusive and civic-oriented (to be a good 'stand-up citizen') view towards a more militarized and exclusive one. Their study shows that, while people's vision has also transformed and shifted slightly closer to the state's vision, it still differs from the state-imposed version of patriotism in certain ways and remains more diverse across society. The very notion of patriotism in public opinion has remained largely the same regardless of the 'rallying around the flag' in 2014. Thus, the Soviet-style nexus between patriotism and militarism has lost its legitimacy and people in Russia 'just want to live in peace without a great idea' (Alexievich, 2017, p. 4).

Indeed, a survey conducted by the state-aligned pollster VTsIOM in September 2016 shows a growing gap between young people and the older generation's willingness to take up arms in the event of war. Furthermore, as argued by Lassila in Chapter 5 of this volume, the greatest challenge of patriotic politics and its implementation is the expectations of the youth. The youth aspires for greater autonomy from the top-down managed activities and inherent in them interpretations of militarized patriotism. In fact, Mitikka and Zavadskaya show that, 'while Russian patriotism

does contain authoritarian connotations, the connection between authoritarianism and patriotism is far from straightforward. Not all patriots share an authoritarian vision of political system and not all who prefer a stronger hand share strong patriotic views. This, in turn, might indicate that the Kremlin-promoted narratives may have been successful in activating at least some groups of Russian society but not the overwhelming majority of Russians'. This insight is important, as it suggests a greater friction between the political elites and population at large. In turn, Zhirkov's (2019, p. 430) study on Russian foreign policy elite's attitudes towards international relations and cognitive styles shows that 'militant internationalism' (the perception of an external threat and readiness to use force abroad) represents an internally consistent attitude, mirroring a similar attitude among the US foreign policy elite. While the anti-Americanism varies depending on political events, Zhirkov's analysis also shows a steady increase in militaristic attitudes among the foreign policy elite (Zhirkov, 2019, p. 428).

The elite's attitudes are reflected in the Russian security strategies, namely in the national security strategy and in the military doctrine, insofar as these documents identify the inadequate patriotism of specific groups of the population, in particular the Russian youth, as a threat to national security. On this basis, Russia has invested more discursive and financial resources into the activities that aim to shape young people's identity along the lines favoured by the state authorities. One of the main resources in this regard is the Young Army movement, established in 2015. As shown by Jonna Alava in Chapter 9, the movement is legitimated with discourse of heroism, masculinity, a beneficial and fun hobby, citizen-soldier and military traditionalism. The young people participating in the activities are represented as the 'best patriots' and the activities are clearly oriented towards raising patriotic and loyal citizens and preparing them for the army.

Indeed, according to the Levada Center's 2020 poll (2020), the armed forces are the most trusted institution in Russia, even before the president. Moreover, the public opinion polls show a longer-term positive trend in society's perception of the armed forces. Although the public perception of the armed forces fluctuates

depending on the context (international conflicts may increase or decrease trust towards the army), since late 2013 the proportion of the population that does *not* trust the armed forces has started to decline. More people also support military service (see Arseniy Svynarenko, Chapter 8, this volume). Yet, attitudes towards the armed forces in Russia remain ambiguous. The older generations tend to see the military and the military service more positively than younger people. Moreover, the positive perceptions do not readily translate into people's willingness to participate in the conflicts. As Mitikka and Zavadskaya show in Chapter 6, while trust towards the armed forces has grown, the desire to fight is prone to fluctuate depending on the political trends. The hypothesis put forward by Svynarenko is that reorganization of the military-political training within the Russian armed forces is aimed at consolidating moral and political views among the youth (young conscripts and military personnel) as well as their willingness to fight.

These types of activities fit the description provided by Patrick M. Regan (1994) on militarization as a process whereby society is prepared for war. The role of the mass media is important, as it may facilitate the spread and amplify enemy images and perceptions of external threat. To this end, Chapter 7 by Salla Nazarenko in this volume is important as it shows that perceptions of patriotism among Russian TV journalists vary significantly. The Russian state authorities rely on television in channelling the official (propagandistic) messages to the general public. Interestingly, Nazarenko's chapter distinguishes between three different types of patriotism among journalists: intimate patriotism, military patriotism and 'infowar' patriotism. The latter two subscribe to the official discourse on patriotism, whereas intimate patriotism is an expression of affection for the suffering nation, Russia.

The notion of a suffering nation and the spectre of war brings us to Chapter 10 in this volume, written by Elina Kahla. In her chapter, Kahla examines the apologetics of dying on duty, a theme that was actualized in the aftermath of the *Kursk* disaster in August 2000, and later inspired authors of cultural productions. The first cultural product, the illustrated album *Everlasting Lamp of the*

Kursk, explores the theological-mystical meaning of the disaster, and in so doing turns abstract and ideologically charged representations of military patriotism inside out. Kahla ties the question of blood sacrifice to the unresolved problem of memory politics in Russia. The belief in blood sacrifice subsidies for Russian authorities' unwillingness to accept responsibility for the disaster, and in general for the country's totalitarian past, in particular towards the victims of the Great Terror. Kahla also discusses the representation of the *Kursk* tragedy in another cultural product, the film *Kursk*, directed by Danish director Thomas Vinterberg. As suggested by Kahla, this film explores 'the blurry boundary between a domestic and a global realm' and universal sentiments of bravery and grief aroused in the *Kursk* tragedy. In the absence of a genuine dialogue on the politics of memory in Russia, these cultural products offer a view on possible futures and histories.

This volume has contributed to the ongoing scholarly discussion on patriotism and militarism in Russia. It has also set out possible new areas of research, in particular on the assumptions and blind spots of national security narratives and threat perceptions. The national threat perceptions and security narratives are constructed through the past failures and successes (Krebs, 2015) and meaning attached to them often afterwards. This meaning is rarely an objective evaluation based on all the information available but more often a process based on the political needs of that particular point in history (Gray, 2002, p. 1). To facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the nexus of patriotism and militarism, as well as the role of different stakeholders, from politicians and researchers to the general public, is an important task of future research.

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This volume explores patriotism and militarism in today's Russia. During the last 20-year period, there has been a consistent effort in Russia to consolidate the nation and to foster a sense of unity and common purpose. To this end, Russian authorities have activated various channels, from educational programmes and youth organizations to media and popular culture. With the conflict in Ukraine, the manipulation of public sentiments – feeling of pride and perception of threat – has become more systemic. The traditional view of Russia being Other for Europe has been replaced with a narrative of enmity. The West is portrayed as a threat to Russia's historical-cultural originality while Russia represents itself as a country encircled by enemies. On the other hand, these state-led projects mixing patriotism and militarism are perceived sceptically by the Russian society, especially the younger generations.

This volume contributes to the current debates on the evolution of enemy images in Russia and the ways in which societal actors perceive official projections of patriotism and militarism in the Russian society.

Katri Pynnöniemi holds a joint Mannerheim professorship of Russian security studies at the University of Helsinki and at the Finnish National Defense University. She has published widely on the system change in Russia as well as on Russian foreign and security policy. The contributors of the volume include several scholars on Russian studies, contemporary history, political science, sociology, and media studies.

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